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1897

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# THE WORKS

OF

# *Robert G. Ingersoll*

"THE HANDS THAT HELP ARE BETTER FAR THAN LIPS THAT PRAY."

IN TWELVE VOLUMES

VOLUME IV.

## LECTURES

NEW YORK
THE DRESDEN PUBLISHING CO.,
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# CONTENTS OF VOLUME IV.


## WHY I AM AN AGNOSTIC.

(1896.)

I. Influence of Birth in determining Religious Belief—Scotch, Irish, English, and Americans Inherit their Faith—Religions of Nations not Suddenly Changed—People who Knew—What they were Certain About—Revivals—Character of Sermons Preached—Effect of Conversion—A Vermont Farmer for whom Perdition had no Terrors—The Man and his Dog—Backsliding and Re-birth—Ministers who were Sincere—A Free Will Baptist on the Rich Man and Lazarus—II. The Orthodox God—The Two Dispensations—The Infinite Horror—III. Religious Books—The Commentators—Paley's Watch Argument—Milton, Young, and Pollok—IV. Studying Astronomy—Geology—Denial and Evasion by the Clergy—V. The Poems of Robert Burns—Byron, Shelley, Keats, and Shakespeare—VI. Volney, Gibbon, and Thomas Paine—Voltaire's Services to Liberty—Pagans Compared with Patriarchs—VII. Other Gods and Other Religions—Dogmas, Myths, and Symbols of Christianity Older than our Era—VIII. The Men of Science, Humboldt, Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Haeckel—IX. Matter and Force Indestructible and Uncreatable—The Theory of Design—X. God an Impossible Being—The Panorama of the Past—XI. Free from Sanctified Mistakes and Holy Lies, . . . . . 5-67

## THE TRUTH.

(1897.)

I. The Martyrdom of Man—How is Truth to be Found—Every Man should be Mentally Honest—He should be Intellectually Hospitable—Geologists, Chemists, Mechanics, and Professional Men are Seeking for the Truth—II. Those who say that Slavery is Better than Liberty—Promises are not Evidence—Horace Greeley and the Cold Stove—III. "The Science of Theology" the only Dishonest Science—Moses and Brigham Young—Minds Poisoned and Paralyzed in Youth—Sunday Schools and Theological Seminaries—Orthodox Slanderers of Scientists—Religion has nothing to do with Charity—Hospitals Built in Self-Defence—What Good has the Church Accomplished?—Of what use are the Orthodox Ministers, and What are they doing for the Good of Mankind—The Harm they are Doing—Delusions they Teach—Truths they Should Tell about the Bible—Conclusions—Our Christs and our Miracles, . . . . . 71-111

## HOW TO REFORM MANKIND.

(1896.)

I. "There is no Darkness but Ignorance"—False Notions Concerning All Departments of Life—Changed Ideas about Science, Government and Morals—II. How can we Reform the World?—Intellectual Light the First Necessity—Avoid Waste of Wealth in War—III. Another Waste—Vast Amount of Money Spent on the Church—IV. How can we Lessen Crime?—Frightful Laws for the Punishment of

Minor Crimes—A Penitentiary should be a School—Professional Criminals should not be Allowed to Populate the Earth—V. Homes for All—Make a Nation of Householders—Marriage and Divorce—VI. The Labor Question—Employers cannot Govern Prices—Railroads should Pay Pensions—What has been Accomplished for the Improvement of the Condition of Labor—VII. Educate the Children—Useless Knowledge—Liberty cannot be Sacrificed for the Sake of Anything—False worship of Wealth—VIII. We must Work and Wait, 115-156

A THANKSGIVING SERMON.

(1897.)

I. Our fathers Ages Ago—From Savagery to Civilization—For the Blessings we enjoy, Whom should we Thank?—What Good has the Church Done?—Did Christ add to the Sum of Useful Knowledge—The Saints—What have the Councils and Synods Done?—What they Gave us, and What they did Not—Shall we Thank them for the Hell Here and for the Hell of the Future?—II. What Does God Do?—The Infinite Juggler and his Puppets—What the Puppets have Done—Shall we Thank these Gods?—Shall we Thank Nature?—III. Men who deserve our Thanks—The Infidels, Philanthropists and Scientists—The Discoverers and Inventors—Magellan—Copernicus—Bruno—Galileo—Kepler, Herschel, Newton, and LaPlace—Lyell—What the Worldly have Done—Origin and Vicissitudes of the Bible—The Septuagint—Investigating the Phenomena of Nature—IV. We thank the Good Men and Good Women of the Past—The Poets, Dramatists, and Artists—The Statesmen—Paine, Jefferson, Ericsson, Lincoln, Grant—Voltaire, Humboldt, Darwin, . . . . . 159-208

A LAY SERMON.

(1886.)

Prayer of King Lear—When Honesty wears a Rag and Rascality a Robe—The Nonsense of "Free Moral Agency"—Doing Right is not Self-denial—Wealth often a Gilded Hell—The Log House—Insanity of Getting More—Great Wealth the Mother of Crime—Separation of Rich and Poor—Emulation—Invention of Machines to Save Labor—Production and Destitution—The Remedy a Division of the Land—Evils of Tenement Houses—Ownership and Use—The Great Weapon is the Ballot—Sewing Women—Strikes and Boycotts of No Avail—Anarchy, Communism, and Socialism—The Children of the Rich a Punishment for Wealth—Workingmen Not a Danger—The Criminals a Necessary Product—Society's Right to Punish—The Efficacy of Kindness—Labor is Honorable—Mental Independence, 211-235

THE FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH.

(1896.)

I. The Old Testament—Story of the Creation—Age of the Earth and of Man—Astronomical Calculations of the Egyptians—The Flood—The Firmament a Fiction—Israelites who went into Egypt—Battles of the Jews—Area of Palestine—Gold Collected by David for the Temple—II. The New Testament—Discrepancies about the Birth of Christ—Herod and the Wise Men—The Murder of the Babes of Bethlehem—When was Christ born—Cyrenius and the Census of the World—Genealogy of Christ according to Matthew and Luke—The

Slaying of Zacharias—Appearance of the Saints at the Crucifixion—The Death of Judas Iscariot—Did Christ wish to be Convicted?—III. Jehovah—IV. The Trinity—The Incarnation—Was Christ God?—The Trinity Expounded—"Let us pray"—V. The Theological Christ—Sayings of a Contradictory Character—Christ a Devout Jew—An ascetic—His Philosophy—The Ascension—The Best that Can be Said about Christ—The Part that is beautiful and Glorious—The Other Side—VI. The Scheme of Redemption—VII. Belief—Eternal Pain—No Hope in Hell, Pity in Heaven, or Mercy in the Heart of God—VIII. Conclusion, . . . . . 239-292

SUPERSTITION.

(1898.)

I. What is Superstition?—Popular Beliefs about the Significance of Signs, Lucky and Unlucky Numbers, Days, Accidents, Jewels, etc.—Eclipses, Earthquakes, and Cyclones as Omens—Signs and Wonders of the Heavens—Efficacy of Bones and Rags of Saints—Diseases and Devils—II. Witchcraft—Necromancers—What is a Miracle?—The Uniformity of Nature—III. Belief in the Existence of Good Spirits or Angels—God and the Devil—When Everything was done by the Supernatural—IV. All these Beliefs now Rejected by Men of Intelligence—The Devil's Success Made the Coming of Christ a Necessity—"Thou shalt not Suffer a Witch to Live"—Some Biblical Angels—Vanished Visions—V. Where are Heaven and Hell?—Prayers Never Answered—The Doctrine of Design—Why Worship our Ignorance?—Would God Lead us into Temptation?—President McKinley's Thanksgiving for the Santiago Victory—VI. What Harm Does Superstition Do?—The Heart Hardens and the Brain Softens—What Superstition has Done and Taught—Fate of Spain—Of Portugal, Austria, Germany—VII. Inspired Books—Mysteries added to by the Explanations of Theologians—The Inspired Bible the Greatest Curse of Christendom—VIII. Modifications of Jehovah—Changing the Bible—IX. Centuries of Darkness—The Church Triumphant—When Men began to Think—X. Possibly these Superstitions are True, but We have no Evidence—We Believe in the Natural—Science is the Real Redeemer, 295-349

THE DEVIL.

(1899.)

I. If the Devil should Die, would God Make Another?—How was the Idea of a Devil Produced—Other Devils than Ours—Natural Origin of these Monsters—II. The Atlas of Christianity is The Devil—The Devil of the Old Testament—The Serpent in Eden—"Personifications" of Evil—Satan and Job—Satan and David—III. Take the Devil from the Drama of Christianity and the Plot is Gone—Jesus Tempted by the Evil One—Demoniac Possession—Mary Magdalene—Satan and Judas—Incubi and Succubi—The Apostles believed in Miracles and Magic—The Pool of Bethesda—IV. The Evidence of the Church—The Devil was forced to Father the Failures of God—Belief of the Fathers of the Church in Devils—Exorcism at the Baptism of an Infant in the Sixteenth Century—Belief in Devils made the Universe a Madhouse presided over by an Insane God—V. Personifications of the Devil—The Orthodox Ostrich Thrusts his Head into the Sand—If Devils are Personifications so are all the Other Char-

acters of the Bible—VI. Some Queries about the Devil, his Place of Residence, his Manner of Living, and his Object in Life—Interrogatories to the Clergy—VII. The Man of Straw the Master of the Orthodox Ministers—His recent Accomplishments—VIII. Keep the Devils out of Children—IX. Conclusion.—Declaration of the Free, 353-419

PROGRESS.

(1860-64.)

The Prosperity of the World depends upon its Workers—Veneration for the Ancient—Credulity and Faith of the Middle Ages—Penalty for Reading the Scripture in the Mother Tongue—Unjust, Bloody, and Cruel Laws—The Reformers too were Persecutors—Bigotry of Luther and Knox—Persecution of Castalio—Montaigne against Torture in France—"Witchcraft" (chapter on)—Confessed Wizards—A Case before Sir Matthew Hale—Belief in Lycanthropy—Animals Tried and Executed—Animals received as Witnesses—The Corsned or Morsel of Execution—Kepler an Astrologer—Luther's Encounter with the Devil—Mathematician Stoefflers, Astronomical Prediction of a Flood—Histories Filled with Falsehood—Legend about the Daughter of Pharaoh invading Scotland and giving the Country her name—A Story about Mohammed—A History of the Britains written by Archdeacons—Ingenuous Remark of Eusebius—Progress in the Mechanic Arts—England at the beginning of the Eighteenth Century—Barbarous Punishments—Queen Elizabeth's Order Concerning Clergymen and Servant Girls—Inventions of Watt, Arkwright, and Others—Solomon's Deprivations—Language (chapter on)—Belief that the Hebrew was the original Tongue—Speculations about the Language of Paradise—Geography (chapter on)—The Works of Cosmas—Printing Invented—Church's Opposition to Books—The Inquisition—The Reformation—"Slavery" (chapter on)—Voltaire's Remark on Slavery as a Contract—White Slaves in Greece, Rome, England, Scotland, and France—Free minds make Free Bodies—Causes of the Abolition of White Slavery in Europe—The French Revolution—The African Slave Trade, its Beginning and End—Liberty Triumphed (chapter head)—Abolition of Chattel Slavery—Conclusion, . . . . . 423-476

WHAT IS RELIGION?

(1899.)

I. Belief in God and Sacrifice—Did an Infinite God Create the Children of Men and is he the Governor of the Universe?—II. If this God Exists, how do we Know he is Good?—Should both the Inferior and the Superior thank God for their Condition?—III. The Power that Works for Righteousness—What is this Power?—The Accumulated Experience of the World is a Power Working for Good?—Love the Commencement of the Higher Virtues—IV. What has our Religion Done?—Would Christians have been Worse had they Adopted another Faith?—V. How Can Mankind be Reformed Without Religion?—VI. The Four Corner-stones of my Theory—VII. Matter and Force Eternal—Links in the Chain of Evolution—VIII. Reform—The Gutter as a Nursery—Can we Prevent the Unfit from Filling the World with their Children?—Science must make Woman the Owner and Mistress of Herself—Morality Born of Intelligence—IX. Real Religion and Real Worship, . . . . . 479-508

# WHY I AM AN AGNOSTIC.

# WHY I AM AN AGNOSTIC.

## I.

FOR the most part we inherit our opinions. We are the heirs of habits and mental customs. Our beliefs, like the fashion of our garments, depend on where we were born. We are moulded and fashioned by our surroundings.

Environment is a sculptor—a painter.

If we had been born in Constantinople, the most of us would have said: "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet." If our parents had lived on the banks of the Ganges, we would have been worshipers of Siva, longing for the heaven of Nirvana.

As a rule, children love their parents, believe what they teach, and take great pride in saying that the religion of mother is good enough for them.

Most people love peace. They do not like to differ with their neighbors. They like company. They are social. They enjoy traveling on the highway with the multitude. They hate to walk alone.

The Scotch are Calvinists because their fathers were. The Irish are Catholics because their fathers were. The English are Episcopalians because their fathers were, and the Americans are divided in a hundred sects because their fathers were. This is the general rule, to which there are many exceptions. Children sometimes are superior to their parents, modify their ideas, change their customs, and arrive at different conclusions. But this is generally so gradual that the departure is scarcely noticed, and those who change usually insist that they are still following the fathers.

It is claimed by Christian historians that the religion of a nation was sometimes suddenly changed, and that millions of Pagans were made into Christians by the command of a king. Philosophers do not agree with these historians. Names have been changed, altars have been overthrown, but opinions, customs and beliefs remained the same. A Pagan, beneath the drawn sword of a Christian, would probably change his religious views, and a Christian, with a scimitar above his head, might suddenly become a Mohammedan, but as a matter of fact both would remain exactly as they were before—except in speech.

Belief is not subject to the will. Men think as

they must. Children do not, and cannot, believe exactly as they were taught. They are not exactly like their parents. They differ in temperament, in experience, in capacity, in surroundings. And so there is a continual, though almost imperceptible change. There is development, conscious and unconscious growth, and by comparing long periods of time we find that the old has been almost abandoned, almost lost in the new. Men cannot remain stationary. The mind cannot be securely anchored. If we do not advance, we go backward. If we do not grow, we decay. If we do not develop, we shrink and shrivel.

Like the most of you, I was raised among people who knew—who were certain. They did not reason or investigate. They had no doubts. They knew that they had the truth. In their creed there was no guess—no perhaps. They had a revelation from God. They knew the beginning of things. They knew that God commenced to create one Monday morning, four thousand and four years before Christ. They knew that in the eternity—back of that morning, he had done nothing. They knew that it took him six days to make the earth—all plants, all animals, all life, and all the globes that wheel in space. They knew exactly what he

did each day and when he rested. They knew the origin, the cause of evil, of all crime, of all disease and death.

They not only knew the beginning, but they knew the end. They knew that life had one path and one road. They knew that the path, grass-grown and narrow, filled with thorns and nettles, infested with vipers, wet with tears, stained by bleeding feet, led to heaven, and that the road, broad and smooth, bordered with fruits and flowers, filled with laughter and song and all the happiness of human love, led straight to hell. They knew that God was doing his best to make you take the path and that the Devil used every art to keep you in the road.

They knew that there was a perpetual battle waged between the great Powers of good and evil for the possession of human souls. They knew that many centuries ago God had left his throne and had been born a babe into this poor world—that he had suffered death for the sake of man—for the sake of saving a few. They also knew that the human heart was utterly depraved, so that man by nature was in love with wrong and hated God with all his might.

At the same time they knew that God created

man in his own image and was perfectly satisfied with his work. They also knew that he had been thwarted by the Devil, who with wiles and lies had deceived the first of human kind. They knew that in consequence of that, God cursed the man and woman; the man with toil, the woman with slavery and pain, and both with death; and that he cursed the earth itself with briers and thorns, brambles and thistles. All these blessed things they knew. They knew too all that God had done to purify and elevate the race. They knew all about the Flood—knew that God, with the exception of eight, drowned all his children—the old and young—the bowed patriarch and the dimpled babe—the young man and the merry maiden—the loving mother and the laughing child—because his mercy endureth forever. They knew too, that he drowned the beasts and birds—everything that walked or crawled or flew—because his loving kindness is over all his works. They knew that God, for the purpose of civilizing his children, had devoured some with earthquakes, destroyed some with storms of fire, killed some with his lightnings, millions with famine, with pestilence, and sacrificed countless thousands upon the fields of war. They knew that it was necessary to believe these things and to love God. They knew that there

could be no salvation except by faith, and through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ.

All who doubted or denied would be lost. To live a moral and honest life—to keep your contracts, to take care of wife and child—to make a happy home—to be a good citizen, a patriot, a just and thoughtful man, was simply a respectable way of going to hell.

God did not reward men for being honest, generous and brave, but for the act of faith. Without faith, all the so-called virtues were sins, and the men who practiced these virtues, without faith, deserved to suffer eternal pain.

All of these comforting and reasonable things were taught by the ministers in their pulpits—by teachers in Sunday schools and by parents at home. The children were victims. They were assaulted in the cradle—in their mother's arms. Then, the schoolmaster carried on the war against their natural sense, and all the books they read were filled with the same impossible truths. The poor children were helpless. The atmosphere they breathed was filled with lies—lies that mingled with their blood.

In those days ministers depended on revivals to save souls and reform the world.

In the winter, navigation having closed, business

was mostly suspended. There were no railways and the only means of communication were wagons and boats. Generally the roads were so bad that the wagons were laid up with the boats. There were no operas, no theatres, no amusement except parties and balls. The parties were regarded as worldly and the balls as wicked. For real and virtuous enjoyment the good people depended on revivals.

The sermons were mostly about the pains and agonies of hell, the joys and ecstasies of heaven, salvation by faith, and the efficacy of the atonement. The little churches, in which the services were held, were generally small, badly ventilated, and exceedingly warm. The emotional sermons, the sad singing, the hysterical amens, the hope of heaven, the fear of hell, caused many to lose the little sense they had. They became substantially insane. In this condition they flocked to the "mourner's bench"—asked for the prayers of the faithful—had strange feelings, prayed and wept and thought they had been "born again." Then they would tell their experience—how wicked they had been—how evil had been their thoughts, their desires, and how good they had suddenly become.

They used to tell the story of an old woman who, in telling her experience, said:—"Before I was con-

verted, before I gave my heart to God, I used to lie and steal, but now, thanks to the grace and blood of Jesus Christ, I have quit 'em both, in a great measure."

Of course all the people were not exactly of one mind. There were some scoffers, and now and then some man had sense enough to laugh at the threats of priests and make a jest of hell. Some would tell of unbelievers who had lived and died in peace.

When I was a boy I heard them tell of an old farmer in Vermont. He was dying. The minister was at his bed-side—asked him if he was a Christian —if he was prepared to die. The old man answered that he had made no preparation, that he was not a Christian—that he had never done anything but work. The preacher said that he could give him no hope unless he had faith in Christ, and that if he had no faith his soul would certainly be lost.

The old man was not frightened. He was perfectly calm. In a weak and broken voice he said: "Mr. Preacher, I suppose you noticed my farm. My wife and I came here more than fifty years ago. We were just married. It was a forest then and the land was covered with stones. I cut down the trees, burned the logs, picked up the stones and laid the walls. My wife spun and wove and worked every

moment. We raised and educated our children—denied ourselves. During all these years my wife never had a good dress, or a decent bonnet. I never had a good suit of clothes. We lived on the plainest food. Our hands, our bodies are deformed by toil. We never had a vacation. We loved each other and the children. That is the only luxury we ever had. Now I am about to die and you ask me if I am prepared. Mr. Preacher, I have no fear of the future, no terror of any other world. There may be such a place as hell—but if there is, you never can make me believe that it's any worse than old Vermont."

So, they told of a man who compared himself with his dog. "My dog," he said, "just barks and plays—has all he wants to eat. He never works—has no trouble about business. In a little while he dies, and that is all. I work with all my strength. I have no time to play. I have trouble every day. In a little while I will die, and then I go to hell. I wish that I had been a dog."

Well, while the cold weather lasted, while the snows fell, the revival went on, but when the winter was over, when the steamboat's whistle was heard, when business started again, most of the converts "backslid" and fell again into their old ways. But

the next winter they were on hand, ready to be "born again." They formed a kind of stock company, playing the same parts every winter and backsliding every spring.

The ministers, who preached at these revivals, were in earnest. They were zealous and sincere. They were not philosophers. To them science was the name of a vague dread—a dangerous enemy. They did not know much, but they believed a great deal. To them hell was a burning reality—they could see the smoke and flames. The Devil was no myth. He was an actual person, a rival of God, an enemy of mankind. They thought that the important business of this life was to save your soul—that all should resist and scorn the pleasures of sense, and keep their eyes steadily fixed on the golden gate of the New Jerusalem. They were unbalanced, emotional, hysterical, bigoted, hateful, loving, and insane. They really believed the Bible to be the actual word of God—a book without mistake or contradiction. They called its cruelties, justice—its absurdities, mysteries—its miracles, facts, and the idiotic passages were regarded as profoundly spiritual. They dwelt on the pangs, the regrets, the infinite agonies of the lost, and showed how easily they could be avoided, and how cheaply heaven could be obtained. They

told their hearers to believe, to have faith, to give their hearts to God, their sins to Christ, who would bear their burdens and make their souls as white as snow.

All this the ministers really believed. They were absolutely certain. In their minds the Devil had tried in vain to sow the seeds of doubt.

I heard hundreds of these evangelical sermons—heard hundreds of the most fearful and vivid descriptions of the tortures inflicted in hell, of the horrible state of the lost. I supposed that what I heard was true and yet I did not believe it. I said: "It is," and then I thought: "It cannot be."

These sermons made but faint impressions on my mind. I was not convinced.

I had no desire to be "converted," did not want a "new heart" and had no wish to be "born again."

But I heard one sermon that touched my heart, that left its mark, like a scar, on my brain.

One Sunday I went with my brother to hear a Free Will Baptist preacher. He was a large man, dressed like a farmer, but he was an orator. He could paint a picture with words.

He took for his text the parable of "the rich man and Lazarus." He described Dives, the rich man—his manner of life, the excesses in which he indulged,

his extravagance, his riotous nights, his purple and fine linen, his feasts, his wines, and his beautiful women.

Then he described Lazarus, his poverty, his rags and wretchedness, his poor body eaten by disease, the crusts and crumbs he devoured, the dogs that pitied him. He pictured his lonely life, his friendless death.

Then, changing his tone of pity to one of triumph—leaping from tears to the heights of exultation—from defeat to victory—he described the glorious company of angels, who with white and outspread wings carried the soul of the despised pauper to Paradise—to the bosom of Abraham.

Then, changing his voice to one of scorn and loathing, he told of the rich man's death. He was in his palace, on his costly couch, the air heavy with perfume, the room filled with servants and physicians. His gold was worthless then. He could not buy another breath. He died, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment.

Then, assuming a dramatic attitude, putting his right hand to his ear, he whispered, "Hark! I hear the rich man's voice. What does he say? Hark! 'Father Abraham! Father Abraham! I pray thee send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger

in water and cool my parched tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.'"

"Oh, my hearers, he has been making that request for more than eighteen hundred years. And millions of ages hence that wail will cross the gulf that lies between the saved and lost and still will be heard the cry: 'Father Abraham! Father Abraham! I pray thee send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my parched tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.'"

For the first time I understood the dogma of eternal pain—appreciated "the glad tidings of great joy." For the first time my imagination grasped the height and depth of the Christian horror. Then I said: "It is a lie, and I hate your religion. If it is true, I hate your God."

From that day I have had no fear, no doubt. For me, on that day, the flames of hell were quenched. From that day I have passionately hated every orthodox creed. That Sermon did some good.

## II.

FROM my childhood I had heard read and read the Bible. Morning and evening the sacred volume was opened and prayers were said. The Bible was my first history, the Jews were the first people, and the events narrated by Moses and the other inspired writers, and those predicted by prophets were the all important things. In other books were found the thoughts and dreams of men, but in the Bible were the sacred truths of God.

Yet in spite of my surroundings, of my education, I had no love for God. He was so saving of mercy, so extravagant in murder, so anxious to kill, so ready to assassinate, that I hated him with all my heart. At his command, babes were butchered, women violated, and the white hair of trembling age stained with blood. This God visited the people with pestilence—filled the houses and covered the streets with the dying and the dead—saw babes starving on the empty breasts of pallid mothers, heard the sobs, saw the tears, the sunken cheeks, the sightless eyes,

the new made graves, and remained as pitiless as the pestilence.

This God withheld the rain—caused the famine—saw the fierce eyes of hunger—the wasted forms, the white lips, saw mothers eating babes, and remained ferocious as famine.

It seems to me impossible for a civilized man to love or worship, or respect the God of the Old Testament. A really civilized man, a really civilized woman, must hold such a God in abhorrence and contempt.

But in the old days the good people justified Jehovah in his treatment of the heathen. The wretches who were murdered were idolaters and therefore unfit to live.

According to the Bible, God had never revealed himself to these people and he knew that without a revelation they could not know that he was the true God. Whose fault was it then that they were heathen?

The Christians said that God had the right to destroy them because he created them. What did he create them for? He knew when he made them that they would be food for the sword. He knew that he would have the pleasure of seeing them

As a last answer, as a final excuse, the worshipers of Jehovah said that all these horrible things happened under the "old dispensation" of unyielding law, and absolute justice, but that now under the "new dispensation," all had been changed—the sword of justice had been sheathed and love enthroned. In the Old Testament, they said, God is the judge—but in the New, Christ is the merciful. As a matter of fact, the New Testament is infinitely worse than the Old. In the Old there is no threat of eternal pain. Jehovah had no eternal prison—no everlasting fire. His hatred ended at the grave. His revenge was satisfied when his enemy was dead.

In the New Testament, death is not the end, but the beginning of punishment that has no end. In the New Testament the malice of God is infinite and the hunger of his revenge eternal.

The orthodox God, when clothed in human flesh, told his disciples not to resist evil, to love their enemies, and when smitten on one cheek to turn the other, and yet we are told that this same God, with the same loving lips, uttered these heartless, these fiendish words: "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

These are the words of "eternal love."

No human being has imagination enough to conceive of this infinite horror.

All that the human race has suffered in war and want, in pestilence and famine, in fire and flood,—all the pangs and pains of every disease and every death—all this is as nothing compared with the agonies to be endured by one lost soul.

This is the consolation of the Christian religion. This is the justice of God—the mercy of Christ.

This frightful dogma, this infinite lie, made me the implacable enemy of Christianity. The truth is that this belief in eternal pain has been the real persecutor. It founded the Inquisition, forged the chains, and furnished the fagots. It has darkened the lives of many millions. It made the cradle as terrible as the coffin. It enslaved nations and shed the blood of countless thousands. It sacrificed the wisest, the bravest and the best. It subverted the idea of justice, drove mercy from the heart, changed men to fiends and banished reason from the brain.

Like a venomous serpent it crawls and coils and hisses in every orthodox creed.

It makes man an eternal victim and God an eternal fiend. It is the one infinite horror. Every church in which it is taught is a public curse. Every preacher who teaches it is an enemy of man-

kind. Below this Christian dogma, savagery cannot go. It is the infinite of malice, hatred, and revenge.

Nothing could add to the horror of hell, except the presence of its creator, God.

While I have life, as long as I draw breath, I shall deny with all my strength, and hate with every drop of my blood, this infinite lie.

Nothing gives me greater joy than to know that this belief in eternal pain is growing weaker every day—that thousands of ministers are ashamed of it. It gives me joy to know that Christians are becoming merciful, so merciful that the fires of hell are burning low—flickering, choked with ashes, destined in a few years to die out forever.

For centuries Christendom was a madhouse. Popes, cardinals, bishops, priests, monks and heretics were all insane.

Only a few—four or five in a century were sound in heart and brain. Only a few, in spite of the roar and din, in spite of the savage cries, heard reason's voice. Only a few in the wild rage of ignorance, fear and zeal preserved the perfect calm that wisdom gives.

We have advanced. In a few years the Christians will become—let us hope—humane and sensible

enough to deny the dogma that fills the endless years with pain. They ought to know now that this dogma is utterly inconsistent with the wisdom, the justice, the goodness of their God. They ought to know that their belief in hell, gives to the Holy Ghost—the Dove—the beak of a vulture, and fills the mouth of the Lamb of God with the fangs of a viper.

## III.

IN my youth I read religious books—books about God, about the atonement—about salvation by faith, and about the other worlds. I became familiar with the commentators—with Adam Clark, who thought that the serpent seduced our mother Eve, and was in fact the father of Cain. He also believed that the animals, while in the ark, had their natures' changed to that degree that they devoured straw together and enjoyed each other's society—thus prefiguring the blessed millennium. I read Scott, who was such a natural theologian that he really thought the story of Phaeton—of the wild steeds dashing across the sky—corroborated the story of Joshua having stopped the sun and moon. So, I read Henry and MacKnight and found that God so loved the world that he made up his mind to damn a large majority of the human race. I read Cruden, who made the great Concordance, and made the miracles as small and probable as he could.

I remember that he explained the miracle of feeding the wandering Jews with quails, by saying that even at this day immense numbers of quails crossed

the Red Sea, and that sometimes when tired, they settled on ships that sank beneath their weight. The fact that the explanation was as hard to believe as the miracle made no difference to the devout Cruden.

To while away the time I read Calvin's Institutes, a book calculated to produce, in any natural mind, considerable respect for the Devil.

I read Paley's Evidences and found that the evidence of ingenuity in producing the evil, in contriving the hurtful, was at least equal to the evidence tending to show the use of intelligence in the creation of what we call good.

You know the watch argument was Paley's greatest effort. A man finds a watch and it is so wonderful that he concludes that it must have had a maker. He finds the maker and he is so much more wonderful than the watch that he says he must have had a maker. Then he finds God, the maker of the man, and he is so much more wonderful than the man that he could *not* have had a maker. This is what the lawyers call a departure in pleading.

According to Paley there can be no design without a designer—but there can be a designer without a design. The wonder of the watch suggested the watchmaker, and the wonder of the watchmaker, suggested the creator, and the wonder of the creator

demonstrated that he was not created—but was uncaused and eternal.

We had Edwards on The Will, in which the reverend author shows that necessity has no effect on accountability—and that when God creates a human being, and at the same time determines and decrees exactly what that being shall do and be, the human being is responsible, and God in his justice and mercy has the right to torture the soul of that human being forever. Yet Edwards said that he loved God.

The fact is that if you believe in an infinite God, and also in eternal punishment, then you must admit that Edwards and Calvin were absolutely right. There is no escape from their conclusions if you admit their premises. They were infinitely cruel, their premises infinitely absurd, their God infinitely fiendish, and their logic perfect.

And yet I have kindness and candor enough to say that Calvin and Edwards were both insane.

We had plenty of theological literature. There was Jenkyn on the Atonement, who demonstrated the wisdom of God in devising a way in which the sufferings of innocence could justify the guilty. He tried to show that children could justly be punished for the sins of their ancestors, and that men could, if

they had faith, be justly credited with the virtues of others. Nothing could be more devout, orthodox, and idiotic. But all of our theology was not in prose. We had Milton with his celestial militia—with his great and blundering God, his proud and cunning Devil—his wars between immortals, and all the sublime absurdities that religion wrought within the blind man's brain.

The theology taught by Milton was dear to the Puritan heart. It was accepted by New England, and it poisoned the souls and ruined the lives of thousands. The genius of Shakespeare could not make the theology of Milton poetic. In the literature of the world there is nothing, outside of the "sacred books," more perfectly absurd.

We had Young's Night Thoughts, and I supposed that the author was an exceedingly devout and loving follower of the Lord. Yet Young had a great desire to be a bishop, and to accomplish that end he electioneered with the king's mistress. In other words, he was a fine old hypocrite. In the "Night Thoughts" there is scarcely a genuinely honest, natural line. It is pretence from beginning to end. He did not write what he felt, but what he thought he ought to feel.

We had Pollok's Course of Time, with its worm

that never dies, its quenchless flames, its endless pangs, its leering devils, and its gloating God. This frightful poem should have been written in a mad-house. In it you find all the cries and groans and shrieks of maniacs, when they tear and rend each other's flesh. It is as heartless, as hideous, as hellish as the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy.

We all know the beautiful hymn commencing with the cheerful line: "Hark from the tombs, a doleful sound." Nothing could have been more appropriate for children. It is well to put a coffin where it can be seen from the cradle. When a mother nurses her child, an open grave should be at her feet. This would tend to make the babe serious, reflective, religious and miserable.

God hates laughter and despises mirth. To feel free, untrammeled, irresponsible, joyous,—to forget care and death—to be flooded with sunshine without a fear of night—to forget the past, to have no thought of the future, no dream of God, or heaven, or hell—to be intoxicated with the present—to be conscious only of the clasp and kiss of the one you love —this is the sin against the Holy Ghost.

But we had Cowper's poems. Cowper was sincere. He was the opposite of Young. He had an observing eye, a gentle heart and a sense of the

artistic. He sympathized with all who suffered—with the imprisoned, the enslaved, the outcasts. He loved the beautiful. No wonder that the belief in eternal punishment made this loving soul insane. No wonder that the "tidings of great joy" quenched Hope's great star and left his broken heart in the darkness of despair.

We had many volumes of orthodox sermons, filled with wrath and the terrors of the judgment to come —sermons that had been delivered by savage saints.

We had the Book of Martyrs, showing that Christians had for many centuries imitated the God they worshiped.

We had the history of the Waldenses—of the Reformation of the Church. We had Pilgrim's Progress, Baxter's Call and Butler's Analogy.

To use a Western phrase or saying, I found that Bishop Butler dug up more snakes than he killed—suggested more difficulties than he explained—more doubts than he dispelled.

## IV.

AMONG such books my youth was passed. All the seeds of Christianity—of superstition, were sown in my mind and cultivated with great diligence and care.

All that time I knew nothing of any science—nothing about the other side—nothing of the objections that had been urged against the blessed Scriptures, or against the perfect Congregational creed. Of course I had heard the ministers speak of blasphemers, of infidel wretches, of scoffers who laughed at holy things. They did not answer their arguments, but they tore their characters into shreds and demonstrated by the fury of assertion that they had done the Devil's work. And yet in spite of all I heard—of all I read, I could not quite believe. My brain and heart said No.

For a time I left the dreams, the insanities, the illusions and delusions, the nightmares of theology. I studied astronomy, just a little—I examined maps of the heavens—learned the names of some of the

constellations—of some of the stars—found something of their size and the velocity with which they wheeled in their orbits—obtained a faint conception of astronomical spaces—found that some of the known stars were so far away in the depths of space that their light, traveling at the rate of nearly two hundred thousand miles a second, required many years to reach this little world—found that, compared with the great stars, our earth was but a grain of sand—an atom—found that the old belief that all the hosts of heaven had been created for the benefit of man, was infinitely absurd.

I compared what was really known about the stars with the account of creation as told in Genesis. I found that the writer of the inspired book had no knowledge of astronomy—that he was as ignorant as a Choctaw chief—as an Eskimo driver of dogs. Does any one imagine that the author of Genesis knew anything about the sun—its size? that he was acquainted with Sirius, the North Star, with Capella, or that he knew anything of the clusters of stars so far away that their light, now visiting our eyes, has been traveling for two million years?

If he had known these facts would he have said that Jehovah worked nearly six days to make this

world, and only a part of the afternoon of the fourth day to make the sun and moon and all the stars?

Yet millions of people insist that the writer of Genesis was inspired by the Creator of all worlds.

Now, intelligent men, who are not frightened, whose brains have not been paralyzed by fear, know that the sacred story of creation was written by an ignorant savage. The story is inconsistent with all known facts, and every star shining in the heavens testifies that its author was an uninspired barbarian.

I admit that this unknown writer was sincere, that he wrote what he believed to be true—that he did the best he could. He did not claim to be inspired —did not pretend that the story had been told to him by Jehovah. He simply stated the "facts" as he understood them.

After I had learned a little about the stars I concluded that this writer, this "inspired" scribe, had been misled by myth and legend, and that he knew no more about creation than the average theologian of my day. In other words, that he knew absolutely nothing.

And here, allow me to say that the ministers who are answering me are turning their guns in the

wrong direction. These reverend gentlemen should attack the astronomers. They should malign and vilify Kepler, Copernicus, Newton, Herschel and Laplace. These men were the real destroyers of the sacred story. Then, after having disposed of them, they can wage a war against the stars, and against Jehovah himself for having furnished evidence against the truthfulness of his book.

Then I studied geology—not much, just a little—just enough to find in a general way the principal facts that had been discovered, and some of the conclusions that had been reached. I learned something of the action of fire—of water—of the formation of islands and continents—of the sedimentary and igneous rocks—of the coal measures—of the chalk cliffs, something about coral reefs—about the deposits made by rivers, the effect of volcanoes, of glaciers, and of the all surrounding sea—just enough to know that the Laurentian rocks were millions of ages older than the grass beneath my feet—just enough to feel certain that this world had been pursuing its flight about the sun, wheeling in light and shade, for hundreds of millions of years—just enough to know that the "inspired" writer knew nothing of the history of the earth—nothing of the great forces of nature—of wind and wave and fire—forces that have de-

stroyed and built, wrecked and wrought through all the countless years.

And let me tell the ministers again that they should not waste their time in answering me. They should attack the geologists. They should deny the facts that have been discovered. They should launch their curses at the blaspheming seas, and dash their heads against the infidel rocks.

Then I studied biology—not much—just enough to know something of animal forms, enough to know that life existed when the Laurentian rocks were made—just enough to know that implements of stone, implements that had been formed by human hands, had been found mingled with the bones of extinct animals, bones that had been split with these implements, and that these animals had ceased to exist hundreds of thousands of years before the manufacture of Adam and Eve.

Then I felt sure that the "inspired" record was false—that many millions of people had been deceived and that all I had been taught about the origin of worlds and men was utterly untrue. I felt that I knew that the Old Testament was the work of ignorant men—that it was a mingling of truth and mistake, of wisdom and foolishness, of cruelty and kindness, of philosophy and absurdity—that it con-

tained some elevated thoughts, some poetry,—a good deal of the solemn and commonplace,—some hysterical, some tender, some wicked prayers, some insane predictions, some delusions, and some chaotic dreams.

Of course the theologians fought the facts found by the geologists, the scientists, and sought to sustain the sacred Scriptures. They mistook the bones of the mastodon for those of human beings, and by them proudly proved that "there were giants in those days." They accounted for the fossils by saying that God had made them to try our faith, or that the Devil had imitated the works of the Creator.

They answered the geologists by saying that the "days" in Genesis were long periods of time, and that after all the flood might have been local. They told the astronomers that the sun and moon were not actually, but only apparently, stopped. And that the appearance was produced by the reflection and refraction of light.

They excused the slavery and polygamy, the robbery and murder upheld in the Old Testament by saying that the people were so degraded that Jehovah was compelled to pander to their ignorance and prejudice.

In every way the clergy sought to evade the facts, to dodge the truth, to preserve the creed.

At first they flatly denied the facts—then they be-

littled them—then they harmonized them—then they denied that they had denied them. Then they changed the meaning of the "inspired" book to fit the facts.

At first they said that if the facts, as claimed, were true, the Bible was false and Christianity itself a superstition. Afterward they said the facts, as claimed, were true and that they established beyond all doubt the inspiration of the Bible and the divine origin of orthodox religion.

Anything they could not dodge, they swallowed, and anything they could not swallow, they dodged.

I gave up the Old Testament on account of its mistakes, its absurdities, its ignorance and its cruelty. I gave up the New because it vouched for the truth of the Old. I gave it up on account of its miracles, its contradictions, because Christ and his disciples believed in the existence of devils—talked and made bargains with them, expelled them from people and animals.

This, of itself, is enough. We know, if we know anything, that devils do not exist—that Christ never cast them out, and that if he pretended to, he was either ignorant, dishonest or insane. These stories about devils demonstrate the human, the ignorant origin of the New Testament. I gave up the New Testament because it rewards credulity, and curses brave and honest men, and because it teaches the infinite horror of eternal pain.

## V.

HAVING spent my youth in reading books about religion--about the "new birth"—the disobedience of our first parents, the atonement, salvation by faith, the wickedness of pleasure, the degrading consequences of love, and the impossibility of getting to heaven by being honest and generous, and having become somewhat weary of the frayed and raveled thoughts, you can imagine my surprise, my delight when I read the poems of Robert Burns.

I was familiar with the writings of the devout and insincere, the pious and petrified, the pure and heartless. Here was a natural honest man. I knew the works of those who regarded all nature as depraved, and looked upon love as the legacy and perpetual witness of original sin. Here was a man who plucked joy from the mire, made goddesses of peasant girls, and enthroned the honest man. One whose sympathy, with loving arms, embraced all forms of suffering life, who hated slavery of every kind, who was as natural as heaven's blue, with

humor kindly as an autumn day, with wit as sharp as Ithuriel's spear, and scorn that blasted like the simoon's breath. A man who loved this world, this life, the things of every day, and placed above all else the thrilling ecstasies of human love.

I read and read again with rapture, tears and smiles, feeling that a great heart was throbbing in the lines.

The religious, the lugubrious, the artificial, the spiritual poets were forgotten or remained only as the fragments, the half remembered horrors of monstrous and distorted dreams.

I had found at last a natural man, one who despised his country's cruel creed, and was brave and sensible enough to say: "All religions are auld wives' fables, but an honest man has nothing to fear, either in this world or the world to come."

One who had the genius to write Holy Willie's Prayer—a poem that crucified Calvinism and through its bloodless heart thrust the spear of common sense—a poem that made every orthodox creed the food of scorn—of inextinguishable laughter.

Burns had his faults, his frailties. He was intensely human. Still, I would rather appear at the "Judgment Seat" drunk, and be able to say that I was the author of "A man's a man for 'a that," than

to be perfectly sober and admit that I had lived and died a Scotch Presbyterian.

I read Byron—read his Cain, in which, as in Paradise Lost, the Devil seems to be the better god—read his beautiful, sublime and bitter lines—read his Prisoner of Chillon—his best—a poem that filled my heart with tenderness, with pity, and with an eternal hatred of tyranny.

I read Shelley's Queen Mab—a poem filled with beauty, courage, thought, sympathy, tears and scorn, in which a brave soul tears down the prison walls and floods the cells with light. I read his Skylark—a winged flame—passionate as blood—tender as tears—pure as light.

I read Keats, "whose name was writ in water"—read St. Agnes Eve, a story told with such an artless art that this poor common world is changed to fairy land—the Grecian Urn, that fills the soul with ever eager love, with all the rapture of imagined song—the Nightingale—a melody in which there is the memory of morn—a melody that dies away in dusk and tears, paining the senses with its perfectness.

And then I read Shakespeare, the plays, the sonnets, the poems—read all. I beheld a new heaven and a new earth; Shakespeare, who knew the brain and heart of man—the hopes and fears, the loves and

hatreds, the vices and the virtues of the human race; whose imagination read the tear-blurred records, the blood-stained pages of all the past, and saw falling athwart the outspread scroll the light of hope and love; Shakespeare, who sounded every depth—while on the loftiest peak there fell the shadow of his wings.

I compared the Plays with the "inspired" books—Romeo and Juliet with the Song of Solomon, Lear with Job, and the Sonnets with the Psalms, and I found that Jehovah did not understand the art of speech. I compared Shakespeare's women—his perfect women—with the women of the Bible. I found that Jehovah was not a sculptor, not a painter—not an artist—that he lacked the power that changes clay to flesh—the art, the plastic touch, that moulds the perfect form—the breath that gives it free and joyous life—the genius that creates the faultless.

The sacred books of all the world are worthless dross and common stones compared with Shakespeare's glittering gold and gleaming gems.

## VI.

UP to this time I had read nothing against our blessed religion except what I had found in Burns, Byron and Shelley. By some accident I read Volney, who shows that all religions are, and have been, established in the same way—that all had their Christs, their apostles, miracles and sacred books, and then asked how it is possible to decide which is the true one. A question that is still waiting for an answer.

I read Gibbon, the greatest of historians, who marshaled his facts as skillfully as Cæsar did his legions, and I learned that Christianity is only a name for Paganism—for the old religion, shorn of its beauty—that some absurdities had been exchanged for others—that some gods had been killed—a vast multitude of devils created, and that hell had been enlarged.

And then I read the Age of Reason, by Thomas Paine. Let me tell you something about this sublime and slandered man. He came to this country just before the Revolution. He brought a letter of

introduction from Benjamin Franklin, at that time the greatest American.

In Philadelphia, Paine was employed to write for the *Pennsylvania Magazine*. We know that he wrote at least five articles. The first was against slavery, the second against duelling, the third on the treatment of prisoners—showing that the object should be to reform, not to punish and degrade—the fourth on the rights of woman, and the fifth in favor of forming societies for the prevention of cruelty to children and animals.

From this you see that he suggested the great reforms of our century.

The truth is that he labored all his life for the good of his fellow-men, and did as much to found the Great Republic as any man who ever stood beneath our flag.

He gave his thoughts about religion—about the blessed Scriptures, about the superstitions of his time. He was perfectly sincere and what he said was kind and fair.

The Age of Reason filled with hatred the hearts of those who loved their enemies, and the occupant of every orthodox pulpit became, and still is, a passionate maligner of Thomas Paine.

No one has answered—no one will answer, his

argument against the dogma of inspiration—his objections to the Bible.

He did not rise above all the superstitions of his day. While he hated Jehovah, he praised the God of Nature, the creator and preserver of all. In this he was wrong, because, as Watson said in his Reply to Paine, the God of Nature is as heartless, as cruel as the God of the Bible.

But Paine was one of the pioneers—one of the Titans, one of the heroes, who gladly gave his life, his every thought and act, to free and civilize mankind.

I read Voltaire—Voltaire, the greatest man of his century, and who did more for liberty of thought and speech than any other being, human or "divine." Voltaire, who tore the mask from hypocrisy and found behind the painted smile the fangs of hate. Voltaire, who attacked the savagery of the law, the cruel decisions of venal courts, and rescued victims from the wheel and rack. Voltaire, who waged war against the tyranny of thrones, the greed and heartlessness of power. Voltaire, who filled the flesh of priests with the barbed and poisoned arrows of his wit and made the pious jugglers, who cursed him in public, laugh at themselves in private. Voltaire, who sided with the oppressed, rescued the unfortunate,

championed the obscure and weak, civilized judges, repealed laws and abolished torture in his native land.

In every direction this tireless man fought the absurd, the miraculous, the supernatural, the idiotic, the unjust. He had no reverence for the ancient. He was not awed by pageantry and pomp, by crowned Crime or mitered Pretence. Beneath the crown he saw the criminal, under the miter, the hypocrite.

To the bar of his conscience, his reason, he summoned the barbarism and the barbarians of his time. He pronounced judgment against them all, and that judgment has been affirmed by the intelligent world. Voltaire lighted a torch and gave to others the sacred flame. The light still shines and will as long as man loves liberty and seeks for truth.

I read Zeno, the man who said, centuries before our Christ was born, that man could not own his fellow-man.

"No matter whether you claim a slave by purchase or capture, the title is bad. They who claim to own their fellow-men, look down into the pit and forget the justice that should rule the world."

I became acquainted with Epicurus, who taught the religion of usefulness, of temperance, of courage and wisdom, and who said: "Why should I fear death?

If I am, death is not. If death is, I am not. Why should I fear that which cannot exist when I do?"

I read about Socrates, who when on trial for his life, said, among other things, to his judges, these wondrous words: "I have not sought during my life to amass wealth and to adorn my body, but I have sought to adorn my soul with the jewels of wisdom, patience, and above all with a love of liberty."

So, I read about Diogenes, the philosopher who hated the superfluous—the enemy of waste and greed, and who one day entered the temple, reverently approached the altar, crushed a louse between the nails of his thumbs, and solemnly said: "The sacrifice of Diogenes to all the gods." This parodied the worship of the world—satirized all creeds, and in one act put the essence of religion.

Diogenes must have know of this "inspired" passage—"Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins."

I compared Zeno, Epicurus and Socrates, three heathen wretches who had never heard of the Old Testament or the Ten Commandments, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, three favorites of Jehovah, and I was depraved enough to think that the Pagans were superior to the Patriarchs—and to Jehovah himself.

## VII.

MY attention was turned to other religions, to the sacred books, the creeds and ceremonies of other lands—of India, Egypt, Assyria, Persia, of the dead and dying nations.

I concluded that all religions had the same foundation—a belief in the supernatural—a power above nature that man could influence by worship—by sacrifice and prayer.

I found that all religions rested on a mistaken conception of nature—that the religion of a people was the science of that people, that is to say, their explanation of the world—of life and death—of origin and destiny.

I concluded that all religions had substantially the same origin, and that in fact there has never been but one religion in the world. The twigs and leaves may differ, but the trunk is the same.

The poor African that pours out his heart to his deity of stone is on an exact religious level with the robed priest who supplicates his God. The same

mistake, the same superstition, bends the knees and shuts the eyes of both. Both ask for supernatural aid, and neither has the slightest thought of the absolute uniformity of nature.

It seems probable to me that the first organized ceremonial religion was the worship of the sun. The sun was the "Sky Father," the "All Seeing," the source of life—the fireside of the world. The sun was regarded as a god who fought the darkness, the power of evil, the enemy of man.

There have been many sun-gods, and they seem to have been the chief deities in the ancient religions. They have been worshiped in many lands—by many nations that have passed to death and dust.

Apollo was a sun-god and he fought and conquered the serpent of night. Baldur was a sun-god. He was in love with the Dawn—a maiden. Chrishna was a sun-god. At his birth the Ganges was thrilled from its source to the sea, and all the trees, the dead as well as the living, burst into leaf and bud and flower. Hercules was a sun-god and so was Samson, whose strength was in his hair—that is to say, in his beams. He was shorn of his strength by Delilah, the shadow—the darkness. Osiris, Bacchus, and Mithra, Hermes, Buddha, and

Quetzalcoatl, Prometheus, Zoroaster, and Perseus, Cadom, Lao-tsze, Fo-hi, Horus and Rameses, were all sun-gods.

All of these gods had gods for fathers and their mothers were virgins. The births of nearly all were announced by stars, celebrated by celestial music, and voices declared that a blessing had come to the poor world. All of these gods were born in humble places—in caves, under trees, in common inns, and tyrants sought to kill them all when they were babes. All of these sun-gods were born at the winter solstice—on Christmas. Nearly all were worshiped by "wise men." All of them fasted for forty days—all of them taught in parables—all of them wrought miracles—all met with a violent death, and all rose from the dead.

The history of these gods is the exact history of our Christ.

This is not a coincidence—an accident. Christ was a sun-god. Christ was a new name for an old biography—a survival—the last of the sun-gods. Christ was not a man, but a myth—not a life, but a legend.

I found that we had not only borrowed our Christ—but that all our sacraments, symbols and ceremonies were legacies that we received from the

buried past. There is nothing original in Christianity.

The cross was a symbol thousands of years before our era. It was a symbol of life, of immortality—of the god Agni, and it was chiseled upon tombs many ages before a line of our Bible was written.

Baptism is far older than Christianity—than Judaism. The Hindus, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans had Holy Water long before a Catholic lived. The eucharist was borrowed from the Pagans. Ceres was the goddess of the fields—Bacchus of the vine. At the harvest festival they made cakes of wheat and said: "This is the flesh of the goddess." They drank wine and cried: "This is the blood of our god."

The Egyptians had a Trinity. They worshiped Osiris, Isis and Horus, thousands of years before the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were known.

The Tree of Life grew in India, in China, and among the Aztecs, long before the Garden of Eden was planted.

Long before our Bible was known, other nations had their sacred books.

The dogmas of the Fall of Man, the Atonement and Salvation by Faith, are far older than our religion.

In our blessed gospel,—in our "divine scheme," —there is nothing new—nothing original. All old—all borrowed, pieced and patched.

Then I concluded that all religions had been naturally produced, and that all were variations, modifications of one,—then I felt that I knew that all were the work of man.

## VIII.

THE theologians had always insisted that their God was the creator of all living things—that the forms, parts, functions, colors and varieties of animals were the expressions of his fancy, taste and wisdom—that he made them all precisely as they are to-day—that he invented fins and legs and wings—that he furnished them with the weapons of attack, the shields of defence—that he formed them with reference to food and climate, taking into consideration all facts affecting life.

They insisted that man was a special creation, not related in any way to the animals below him. They also asserted that all the forms of vegetation, from mosses to forests, were just the same to-day as the moment they were made.

Men of genius, who were for the most part free from religious prejudice, were examining these things —were looking for facts. They were examining the fossils of animals and plants—studying the forms of animals—their bones and muscles—the effect of climate and food—the strange modifications through which they had passed.

Humboldt had published his lectures—filled with great thoughts—with splendid generalizations—with suggestions that stimulated the spirit of investigation, and with conclusions that satisfied the mind. He demonstrated the uniformity of Nature—the kinship of all that lives and grows—that breathes and thinks.

Darwin, with his Origin of Species, his theories about Natural Selection, the Survival of the Fittest, and the influence of environment, shed a flood of light upon the great problems of plant and animal life.

These things had been guessed, prophesied, asserted, hinted by many others, but Darwin, with infinite patience, with perfect care and candor, found the facts, fulfilled the prophecies, and demonstrated the truth of the guesses, hints and assertions. He was, in my judgment, the keenest observer, the best judge of the meaning and value of a fact, the greatest Naturalist the world has produced.

The theological view began to look small and mean.

Spencer gave his theory of evolution and sustained it by countless facts. He stood at a great height, and with the eyes of a philosopher, a profound thinker, surveyed the world. He has influenced the thought of the wisest.

Theology looked more absurd than ever.

Huxley entered the lists for Darwin. No man ever had a sharper sword—a better shield. He challenged the world. The great theologians and the small scientists—those who had more courage than sense, accepted the challenge. Their poor bodies were carried away by their friends.

Huxley had intelligence, industry, genius, and the courage to express his thought. He was absolutely loyal to what he thought was truth. Without prejudice and without fear, he followed the footsteps of life from the lowest to the highest forms.

Theology looked smaller still.

Haeckel began at the simplest cell, went from change to change—from form to form—followed the line of development, the path of life, until he reached the human race. It was all natural. There had been no interference from without.

I read the works of these great men—of many others—and became convinced that they were right, and that all the theologians—all the believers in "special creation" were absolutely wrong.

The Garden of Eden faded away, Adam and Eve fell back to dust, the snake crawled into the grass, and Jehovah became a miserable myth.

## IX.

I TOOK another step. What is matter—substance? Can it be destroyed—annihilated? Is it possible to conceive of the destruction of the smallest atom of substance? It can be ground to powder—changed from a solid to a liquid—from a liquid to a gas—but it all remains. Nothing is lost—nothing destroyed.

Let an infinite God, if there be one, attack a grain of sand—attack it with infinite power. It cannot be destroyed. It cannot surrender. It defies all force. Substance cannot be destroyed.

Then I took another step.

If matter cannot be destroyed, cannot be annihilated, it could not have been created.

The indestructible must be uncreateable.

And then I asked myself: What is force?

We cannot conceive of the creation of force, or of its destruction. Force may be changed from one form to another—from motion to heat—but it cannot be destroyed—annihilated.

If force cannot be destroyed it could not have been created. It is eternal.

Another thing—matter cannot exist apart from force. Force cannot exist apart from matter. Matter could not have existed before force. Force could not have existed before matter. Matter and force can only be conceived of together. This has been shown by several scientists, but most clearly, most forcibly by Büchner.

Thought is a form of force, consequently it could not have caused or created matter. Intelligence is a form of force and could not have existed without or apart from matter. Without substance there could have been no mind, no will, no force in any form, and there could have been no substance without force.

Matter and force were not created. They have existed from eternity. They cannot be destroyed.

There was, there is, no creator. Then came the question: Is there a God? Is there a being of infinite intelligence, power and goodness, who governs the world?

There can be goodness without much intelligence —but it seems to me that perfect intelligence and perfect goodness must go together.

In nature I see, or seem to see, good and evil—

intelligence and ignorance—goodness and cruelty —care and carelessness—economy and waste. I see means that do not accomplish the ends—designs that seem to fail.

To me it seems infinitely cruel for life to feed on life—to create animals that devour others.

The teeth and beaks, the claws and fangs, that tear and rend, fill me with horror. What can be more frightful than a world at war? Every leaf a battle-field—every flower a Golgotha—in every drop of water pursuit, capture and death. Under every piece of bark, life lying in wait for life. On every blade of grass, something that kills,—something that suffers. Everywhere the strong living on the weak —the superior on the inferior. Everywhere the weak, the insignificant, living on the strong—the inferior on the superior—the highest food for the lowest—man sacrificed for the sake of microbes. Murder universal. Everywhere pain, disease and death—death that does not wait for bent forms and gray hairs, but clutches babes and happy youths. Death that takes the mother from her helpless, dimpled child—death that fills the world with grief and tears.

How can the orthodox Christian explain these things?

I know that life is good. I remember the sunshine and rain. Then I think of the earthquake and flood. I do not forget health and harvest, home and love—but what of pestilence and famine? I cannot harmonize all these contradictions—these blessings and agonies—with the existence of an infinitely good, wise and powerful God.

The theologian says that what we call evil is for our benefit—that we are placed in this world of sin and sorrow to develop character. If this is true I ask why the infant dies? Millions and millions draw a few breaths and fade away in the arms of their mothers. They are not allowed to develop character.

The theologian says that serpents were given fangs to protect themselves from their enemies. Why did the God who made them, make enemies? Why is it that many species of serpents have no fangs?

The theologian says that God armored the hippopotamus, covered his body, except the under part, with scales and plates, that other animals could not pierce with tooth or tusk. But the same God made the rhinoceros and supplied him with a horn on his nose, with which he disembowels the hippopotamus.

The same God made the eagle, the vulture, the hawk, and their helpless prey.

On every hand there seems to be design to defeat design.

If God created man—if he is the father of us all, why did he make the criminals, the insane, the deformed and idiotic?

Should the inferior man thank God? Should the mother, who clasps to her breast an idiot child, thank God? Should the slave thank God?

The theologian says that God governs the wind, the rain, the lightning. How then can we account for the cyclone, the flood, the drought, the glittering bolt that kills?

Suppose we had a man in this country who could control the wind, the rain and lightning, and suppose we elected him to govern these things, and suppose that he allowed whole States to dry and wither, and at the same time wasted the rain in the sea. Suppose that he allowed the winds to destroy cities and to crush to shapelessness thousands of men and women, and allowed the lightnings to strike the life out of mothers and babes. What would we say? What would we think of such a savage?

And yet, according to the theologians, this is exactly the course pursued by God.

What do we think of a man, who will not, when he has the power, protect his friends? Yet the

Christian's God allowed his enemies to torture and burn his friends, his worshipers.

Who has ingenuity enough to explain this?

What good man, having the power to prevent it, would allow the innocent to be imprisoned, chained in dungeons, and sigh against the dripping walls their weary lives away?

If God governs the world, why is innocence not a perfect shield? Why does injustice triumph?

Who can answer these questions?

In answer, the intelligent, honest man must say: I do not know.

## X.

THIS God must be, if he exists, a person—a conscious being. Who can imagine an infinite personality? This God must have force, and we cannot conceive of force apart from matter. This God must be material. He must have the means which he changes force to what we call thought. When he thinks he uses force, force that must be replaced. Yet we are told that he is infinitely wise. If he is, he does not think. Thought is a ladder—a process by which we reach a conclusion. He who knows all conclusions cannot think. He cannot hope or fear. When knowledge is perfect there can be no passion, no emotion. If God is infinite he does not want. He has all. He who does not want does not act. The infinite must dwell in eternal calm.

It is as impossible to conceive of such a being as to imagine a square triangle, or to think of a circle without a diameter.

Yet we are told that it is our duty to love this

God. Can we love the unknown, the inconceivable? Can it be our duty to love anybody? It is our duty to act justly, honestly, but it cannot be our duty to love. We cannot be under obligation to admire a painting—to be charmed with a poem—or thrilled with music. Admiration cannot be controlled. Taste and love are not the servants of the will. Love is, and must be free. It rises from the heart like perfume from a flower.

For thousands of ages men and women have been trying to love the gods—trying to soften their hearts—trying to get their aid.

I see them all. The panorama passes before me. I see them with outstretched hands—with reverently closed eyes—worshiping the sun. I see them bowing, in their fear and need, to meteoric stones—imploring serpents, beasts and sacred trees—praying to idols wrought of wood and stone. I see them building altars to the unseen powers, staining them with blood of child and beast. I see the countless priests and hear their solemn chants. I see the dying victims, the smoking altars, the swinging censers, and the rising clouds. I see the half-god men—the mournful Christs, in many lands. I see the common things of life change to miracles as they speed from mouth to mouth. I see the insane

prophets reading the secret book of fate by signs and dreams. I see them all—the Assyrians chanting the praises of Asshur and Ishtar—the Hindus worshiping Brahma, Vishnu and Draupadi, the white-armed—the Chaldeans sacrificing to Bel and Hea—the Egyptians bowing to Ptah and Ra, Osiris and Isis—the Medes placating the storm, worshiping the fire—the Babylonians supplicating Bel and Morodach—I see them all by the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Ganges and the Nile. I see the Greeks building temples for Zeus, Neptune and Venus. I see the Romans kneeling to a hundred gods. I see others spurning idols and pouring out their hopes and fears to a vague image in the mind. I see the multitudes, with open mouths, receive as truths the myths and fables of the vanished years. I see them give their toil, their wealth to robe the priests, to build the vaulted roofs, the spacious aisles, the glittering domes. I see them clad in rags, huddled in dens and huts, devouring crusts and scraps, that they may give the more to ghosts and gods. I see them make their cruel creeds and fill the world with hatred, war, and death. I see them with their faces in the dust in the dark days of plague and sudden death, when cheeks are wan and lips are white for lack of bread. I hear their prayers, their sighs, their sobs. I see

them kiss the unconscious lips as their hot tears fall on the pallid faces of the dead. I see the nations as they fade and fail. I see them captured and enslaved. I see their altars mingle with the common earth, their temples crumble slowly back to dust. I see their gods grow old and weak, infirm and faint. I see them fall from vague and misty thrones, helpless and dead. The worshipers receive no help. Injustice triumphs. Toilers are paid with the lash, —babes are sold,—the innocent stand on scaffolds, and the heroic perish in flames. I see the earthquakes devour, the volcanoes overwhelm, the cyclones wreck, the floods destroy, and the lightnings kill.

The nations perished. The gods died. The toil and wealth were lost. The temples were built in vain, and all the prayers died unanswered in the heedless air.

Then I asked myself the question: Is there a supernatural power—an arbitrary mind—an enthroned God—a supreme will that sways the tides and currents of the world—to which all causes bow?

I do not deny. I do not know—but I do not believe. I believe that the natural is supreme—that from the infinite chain no link can be lost or broken —that there is no supernatural power that can

answer prayer—no power that worship can persuade or change—no power that cares for man.

I believe that with infinite arms Nature embraces the all—that there is no interference—no chance—that behind every event are the necessary and countless causes, and that beyond every event will be and must be the necessary and countless effects.

Man must protect himself. He cannot depend upon the supernatural—upon an imaginary father in the skies. He must protect himself by finding the facts in Nature, by developing his brain, to the end that he may overcome the obstructions and take advantage of the forces of Nature.

Is there a God?

I do not know.

Is man immortal?

I do not know.

One thing I do know, and that is, that neither hope nor fear, belief, nor denial, can change the fact. It is as it is, and it will be as it must be.

We wait and hope.

## XI.

WHEN I became convinced that the Universe is natural—that all the ghosts and gods are myths, there entered into my brain, into my soul, into every drop of my blood, the sense, the feeling, the joy of freedom. The walls of my prison crumbled and fell, the dungeon was flooded with light and all the bolts, and bars, and manacles became dust. I was no longer a servant, a serf or a slave. There was for me no master in all the wide world—not even in infinite space. I was free—free to think, to express my thoughts—free to live to my own ideal—free to live for myself and those I loved—free to use all my faculties, all my senses—free to spread imagination's wings—free to investigate, to guess and dream and hope—free to judge and determine for myself—free to reject all ignorant and cruel creeds, all the "inspired" books that savages have produced, and all the barbarous legends of the past—free from popes and priests—free from all the "called" and "set apart"—free from sanctified

mistakes and holy lies—free from the fear of eternal pain—free from the winged monsters of the night—free from devils, ghosts and gods. For the first time I was free. There were no prohibited places in all the realms of thought—no air, no space, where fancy could not spread her painted wings—no chains for my limbs—no lashes for my back—no fires for my flesh—no master's frown or threat—no following another's steps—no need to bow, or cringe, or crawl, or utter lying words. I was free. I stood erect and fearlessly, joyously, faced all worlds.

And then my heart was filled with gratitude, with thankfulness, and went out in love to all the heroes, the thinkers who gave their lives for the liberty of hand and brain — for the freedom of labor and thought—to those who fell on the fierce fields of war, to those who died in dungeons bound with chains—to those who proudly mounted scaffold's stairs—to those whose bones were crushed, whose flesh was scarred and torn—to those by fire consumed—to all the wise, the good, the brave of every land, whose thoughts and deeds have given freedom to the sons of men. And then I vowed to grasp the torch that they had held, and hold it high, that light might conquer darkness still.

Let us be true to ourselves—true to the facts we

know, and let us, above all things, preserve the veracity of our souls.

If there be gods we cannot help them, but we can assist our fellow-men. We cannot love the inconceivable, but we can love wife and child and friend.

We can be as honest as we are ignorant. If we are, when asked what is beyond the horizon of the known, we must say that we do not know. We can tell the truth, and we can enjoy the blessed freedom that the brave have won. We can destroy the monsters of superstition, the hissing snakes of ignorance and fear. We can drive from our minds the frightful things that tear and wound with beak and fang. We can civilize our fellow-men. We can fill our lives with generous deeds, with loving words, with art and song, and all the ecstasies of love. We can flood our years with sunshine—with the divine climate of kindness, and we can drain to the last drop the golden cup of joy.

# THE TRUTH.

# THE TRUTH.

## I.

THROUGH millions of ages, by countless efforts to satisfy his wants, to gratify his passions, his appetites, man slowly developed his brain, changed two of his feet into hands and forced into the darkness of his brain a few gleams and glimmerings of reason. He was hindered by ignorance, by fear, by mistakes, and he advanced only as he found the truth—the absolute facts. Through countless years he has groped and crawled and struggled and climbed and stumbled toward the light. He has been hindered and delayed and deceived by augurs and prophets—by popes and priests. He has been betrayed by saints, misled by apostles and Christs, frightened by devils and ghosts—enslaved by chiefs and kings—robbed by altars and thrones. In the name of education his mind has been filled with mistakes, with miracles, and lies, with the impossible, the absurd and infamous. In the name of religion he has been taught humility and arrogance, love and hatred, forgiveness and revenge.

But the world is changing. We are tired of barbarian bibles and savage creeds.

Nothing is greater, nothing is of more importance, than to find amid the errors and darkness of this life, a shining truth.

Truth is the intellectual wealth of the world.

The noblest of occupations is to search for truth.

Truth is the foundation, the superstructure, and the glittering dome of progress.

Truth is the mother of joy. Truth civilizes, ennobles, and purifies. The grandest ambition that can enter the soul is to know the truth.

Truth gives man the greatest power for good. Truth is sword and shield. It is the sacred light of the soul.

The man who finds a truth lights a torch.

## How is Truth to be Found?

By investigation, experiment and reason.

Every human being should be allowed to investigate to the extent of his desire—his ability. The literature of the world should be open to him—nothing prohibited, sealed or hidden. No subject can be too sacred to be understood. Each person should be allowed to reach his own conclusions and to speak his honest thought.

He who threatens the investigator with punishment here, or hereafter, is an enemy of the human race. And he who tries to bribe the investigator with the promise of eternal joy is a traitor to his fellow-men.

There is no real investigation without freedom—freedom from the fear of gods and men.

So, all investigation—all experiment—should be pursued in the light of reason.

Every man should be true to himself—true to the inward light. Each man, in the laboratory of his own mind, and for himself alone, should test the so-called facts—the theories of all the world. Truth, *in accordance with his reason*, should be his guide and master.

To love the truth, thus perceived, is mental virtue—intellectual purity. This is true manhood. This is freedom.

To throw away your reason at the command of churches, popes, parties, kings or gods, is to be a serf, a slave.

It is not simply the right, but it is the duty of every man to think—to investigate for himself—and every man who tries to prevent this by force or fear, is doing all he can to degrade and enslave his fellow-men.

### Every Man Should be Mentally Honest.

He should preserve as his most precious jewel the perfect veracity of his soul.

He should examine all questions presented to his mind, without prejudice,—unbiased by hatred or love—by desire or fear. His object and his only object should be to find the truth. He knows, if he listens to reason, that truth is not dangerous and that error is. He should weigh the evidence, the arguments, in honest scales—scales that passion or interest cannot change. He should care nothing for authority—nothing for names, customs or creeds—nothing for anything that his reason does not say is true.

Of his world he should be the sovereign, and his soul should wear the purple. From his dominions should be banished the hosts of force and fear.

### He Should be Intellectually Hospitable.

Prejudice, egotism, hatred, contempt, disdain, are the enemies of truth and progress.

The real searcher after truth will not receive the old because it is old, or reject the new because it is new. He will not believe men because they are dead, or contradict them because they are alive. With him an utterance is worth the truth, the reason

it contains, without the slightest regard to the author. He may have been a king or serf—a philosopher or servant,—but the utterance neither gains nor loses in truth or reason. Its value is absolutely independent of the fame or station of the man who gave it to the world.

Nothing but falsehood needs the assistance of fame and place, of robes and mitres, of tiaras and crowns.

The wise, the really honest and intelligent, are not swayed or governed by numbers—by majorities.

They accept what they really believe to be true. They care nothing for the opinions of ancestors, nothing for creeds, assertions and theories, unless they satisfy the reason.

In all directions they seek for truth, and when found, accept it with joy—accept it in spite of preconceived opinions—in spite of prejudice and hatred.

This is the course pursued by wise and honest men, and no other course is possible for them.

In every department of human endeavor men are seeking for the truth—for the facts. The statesman reads the history of the world, gathers the statistics of all nations to the end that his country may avoid the mistakes of the past. The geologist penetrates the rocks in search of facts—climbs mountains, visits

the extinct craters, traverses islands and continents that he may know something of the history of the world. He wants the truth.

The chemist, with crucible and retort, with countless experiments, is trying to find the qualities of substances—to ravel what nature has woven.

The great mechanics dwell in the realm of the real. They seek by natural means to conquer and use the forces of nature. They want the truth—the actual facts.

The physicians, the surgeons, rely on observation, experiment and reason. They become acquainted with the human body—with muscle, blood and nerve —with the wonders of the brain. They want nothing but the truth.

And so it is with the students of every science. On every hand they look for facts, and it is of the utmost importance that they give to the world the facts they find.

Their courage should equal their intelligence. No matter what the dead have said, or the living believe, they should tell what they know. They should have intellectual courage.

If it be good for man to find the truth—good for him to be intellectually honest and hospitable, then it is good for others to know the truths thus found.

Every man should have the courage to give his honest thought. This makes the finder and publisher of truth a public benefactor.

Those who prevent, or try to prevent, the expression of honest thought, are the foes of civilization—the enemies of truth. Nothing can exceed the egotism and impudence of the man who claims the right to express his thought and denies the same right to others.

It will not do to say that certain ideas are sacred, and that man has not the right to investigate and test these ideas for himself.

Who knows that they are sacred? Can anything be sacred to us that we do not know to be true?

For many centuries free speech has been an insult to God. Nothing has been more blasphemous than the expression of honest thought. For many ages the lips of the wise were sealed. The torches that truth had lighted, that courage carried and held aloft, were extinguished with blood.

Truth has always been in favor of free speech—has always asked to be investigated—has always longed to be known and understood. Freedom, discussion, honesty, investigation and courage are the friends and allies of truth. Truth loves the light and the open field. It appeals to the senses

—to the judgment, the reason, to all the higher and nobler faculties and powers of the mind. It seeks to calm the passions, to destroy prejudice and to increase the volume and intensity of reason's flame.

It does not ask man to cringe or crawl. It does not desire the worship of the ignorant or the prayers and praises of the frightened. It says to every human being, "Think for yourself. Enjoy the freedom of a god, and have the goodness and the courage to express your honest thought."

Why should we pursue the truth? and why should we investigate and reason? and why should we be mentally honest and hospitable? and why should we express our honest thoughts? To this there is but one answer: for the benefit of mankind.

The brain must be developed. The world must think. Speech must be free. The world must learn that credulity is not a virtue and that no question is settled until reason is fully satisfied.

By these means man will overcome many of the obstructions of nature. He will cure or avoid many diseases. He will lessen pain. He will lengthen, ennoble and enrich life. In every direction he will increase his power. He will satisfy his wants, gratify his tastes. He will put roof and raiment, food and fuel, home and happiness within the reach of all.

He will drive want and crime from the world. He will destroy the serpents of fear, the monsters of superstition. He will become intelligent and free, honest and serene.

The monarch of the skies will be dethroned—the flames of hell will be extinguished. Pious beggars will become honest and useful men. Hypocrisy will collect no tolls from fear, lies will not be regarded as sacred, this life will not be sacrificed for another, human beings will love each other instead of gods, men will do right, not for the sake of reward in some other world, but for the sake of happiness here. Man will find that Nature is the only revelation, and that he, by his own efforts, must learn to read the stories told by star and cloud, by rock and soil, by sea and stream, by rain and fire, by plant and flower, by life in all its curious forms, and all the things and forces of the world.

When he reads these stories, these records, he will know that man must rely on himself,—that the supernatural does not exist, and that man must be the providence of man.

It is impossible to conceive of an argument against the freedom of thought—against maintaining your self-respect and preserving the spotless and stainless veracity of the soul.

## II.

ALL that I have said seems to be true—almost self-evident,—and you may ask who it is that says slavery is better than liberty. Let me tell you.

All the popes and priests, all the orthodox churches and clergymen, say that they have a revelation from God.

The Protestants say that it is the duty of every person to read, to understand, and to believe this revelation—that a man should use his reason; but if he honestly concludes that the Bible is not a revelation from God, and dies with that conclusion in his mind, he will be tormented forever. They say:—"Read," and then add: "Believe, or be damned."

"No matter how unreasonable the Bible may appear to you, you must believe. No matter how impossible the miracles may seem, you must believe. No matter how cruel the laws, your heart must approve them all!"

This is what the church calls the liberty of thought.

We read the Bible under the scowl and threat of

God. We read by the glare of hell. On one side is the devil, with the instruments of torture in his hands. On the other, God, ready to launch the infinite curse. And the church says to the readers: "You are free to decide. God is good, and he gives you the liberty to choose."

The popes and the priests say to the poor people: "You need not read the Bible. You cannot understand it. That is the reason it is called a revelation. We will read it for you, and you must believe what we say. We carry the key of hell. Contradict us and you will become eternal convicts in the prison of God."

This is the freedom of the Catholic Church.

And all these priests and clergymen insist that the Bible is superior to human reason—that it is the duty of man to accept it—to believe it, whether he really thinks it is true or not, and without the slightest regard to evidence or reason.

It is his duty to cast out from the temple of his soul the goddess Reason, and bow before the coiled serpent of Fear.

This is what the church calls virtue.

Under these conditions what can thought be worth? The brain, swept by the sirocco of God's curse, becomes a desert.

But this is not all. To compel man to desert the standard of Reason, the church does not entirely rely on the threat of eternal pain to be endured in another world, but holds out the reward of everlasting joy.

To those who believe, it promises the endless ecstasies of heaven. If it cannot frighten, it will bribe. It relies on fear and hope.

A religion, to command the respect of intelligent men, should rest on a foundation of established facts. It should appeal, not to passion, not to hope and fear, but to the judgment. It should ask that all the faculties of the mind, all the senses, should assemble and take counsel together, and that its claims be passed upon and tested without prejudice, without fear, in the calm of perfect candor.

But the church cries: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Without this belief there is no salvation. Salvation is the reward for belief.

Belief is, and forever must be, the result of evidence. A promised reward is not evidence. It sheds no intellectual light. It establishes no fact, answers no objection, and dissipates no doubt.

Is it honest to offer a reward for belief?

The man who gives money to a judge or juror for

a decision or verdict is guilty of a crime. Why? Because he induces the judge, the juror, to decide, not according to the law, to the facts, the right, but according to the bribe.

The bribe is not evidence.

So, the promise of Christ to reward those who will believe is a bribe. It is an attempt to make a promise take the place of evidence. He who says that he believes, and does this for the sake of the reward, corrupts his soul.

Suppose I should say that at the center of the earth there is a diamond one hundred miles in diameter, and that I would give ten thousand dollars to any man who would believe my statement. Could such a promise be regarded as evidence?

Intelligent people would ask not for rewards, but reasons. Only hypocrites would ask for the money.

Yet, according to the New Testament, Christ offered a reward to those who would believe, and this promised reward was to take the place of evidence. When Christ made this promise he forgot, ignored, or held in contempt the rectitude of a brave, free and natural soul.

The declaration that salvation is the reward for belief is inconsistent with mental freedom, and could

have been made by no man who thought that evidence sustained the slightest relation to belief.

Every sermon in which men have been told that they could save their souls by believing, has been an injury. Such sermons dull the moral sense and subvert the true conception of virtue and duty.

The true man, when asked to believe, asks for evidence. The true man, who asks another to believe, offers evidence.

But this is not all.

In spite of the threat of eternal pain—of the promise of everlasting joy, unbelievers increased, and the churches took another step.

The churches said to the unbelievers, the heretics: "Although our God will punish you forever in another world—in his prison—the doors of which open only to receive, we, unless you believe, will torment you now."

And then the members of these churches, led by priests, popes, and clergymen, sought out their unbelieving neighbors—chained them in dungeons, stretched them on racks, crushed their bones, cut out their tongues, extinguished their eyes, flayed them alive and consumed their poor bodies in flames.

All this was done because these Christian savages

believed in the dogma of eternal pain. Because they believed that heaven was the reward for belief. So believing, they were the enemies of free thought and speech—they cared nothing for conscience, nothing for the veracity of a soul,—nothing for the manhood of a man. In all ages most priests have been heartless and relentless. They have calumniated and tortured. In defeat they have crawled and whined. In victory they have killed. The flower of pity never blossomed in their hearts and in their brain. Justice never held aloft the scales. Now they are not as cruel. They have lost their power, but they are still trying to accomplish the impossible. They fill their pockets with "fool's gold" and think they are rich. They stuff their minds with mistakes and think they are wise. They console themselves with legends and myths, have faith in fiction and forgery—give their hearts to ghosts and phantoms and seek the aid of the non-existent.

They put a monster—a master—a tyrant in the sky, and seek to enslave their fellow-men. They teach the cringing virtues of serfs. They abhor the courage of manly men. They hate the man who thinks. They long for revenge.

They warm their hands at the imaginary fires of hell.

I show them that hell does not exist and they denounce me for destroying their consolation.

Horace Greeley, as the story goes, one cold day went into a country store, took a seat by the stove, unbuttoned his coat and spread out his hands.

In a few minutes, a little boy who clerked in the store said: "Mr. Greeley, there aint no fire in that stove."

"You d—d little rascal," said Greeley, "What did you tell me for, I was getting real warm."

## III.

## "THE SCIENCE OF THEOLOGY."

ALL the sciences—except Theology—are eager for facts—hungry for the truth. On the brow of a finder of a fact the laurel is placed.

In a theological seminary, if a professor finds a fact inconsistent with the creed, he must keep it secret or deny it, or lose his place. Mental veracity is a crime, cowardice and hypocrisy are virtues.

A fact, inconsistent with the creed, is denounced as a lie, and the man who declares or announces the fact is a blasphemer. Every professor breathes the air of insincerity. Every one is mentally dishonest. Every one is a pious fraud. Theology is the only dishonest science—the only one that is based on belief—on credulity,—the only one that abhors investigation, that despises thought and denounces reason.

All the great theologians in the Catholic Church have denounced reason as the light furnished by the enemy of mankind—as the road that leads to perdition. All the great Protestant theologians, from

Luther to the orthodox clergy of our time, have been the enemies of reason. All orthodox churches of all ages have been the enemies of science. They attacked the astronomers as though they were criminals—the geologists as though they were assassins. They regarded physicians as the enemies of God—as men who were trying to defeat the decrees of Providence. The biologists, the anthropologists, the archæologists, the readers of ancient inscriptions, the delvers in buried cities, were all hated by the theologians. They were afraid that these men might find something inconsistent with the Bible.

The theologians attacked those who studied other religions. They insisted that Christianity was not a growth—not an evolution—but a revelation. They denied that it was in any way connected with any natural religion.

The facts now show beyond all doubt that all religions came from substantially the same source—but there is not an orthodox Christian theologian who will admit the facts. He must defend his creed—his revelation. He cannot afford to be honest. He was not educated in an honest school. He was not taught to be honest. He was taught to believe and to defend his belief, not only against argument but against facts.

There is not a theologian in the whole world who can produce the slightest, the least particle of evidence tending to show that the Bible is the inspired word of God.

Where is the evidence that the book of Ruth was written by an inspired man? Where is the evidence that God is the author of the Song of Solomon? Where is the evidence that any human being has been inspired? Where is the evidence that Christ was and is God? Where is the evidence that the places called heaven and hell exist? Where is the evidence that a miracle was ever wrought?

There is none.

Theology is entirely independent of evidence.

Where is the evidence that angels and ghosts—that devils and gods exist? Have these beings been seen or touched? Does one of our senses certify to their existence?

The theologians depend on assertions. They have no evidence. They claim that their inspired book is superior to reason and independent of evidence.

They talk about probability—analogy—inferences—but they present no evidence. They say that they know that Christ lived, in the same way that they know that Cæsar lived. They might add that

they know Moses talked with Jehovah on Sinai the same way they know that Brigham Young talked with God in Utah. The evidence in both cases is the same,—none in either.

How do they prove that Christ rose from the dead? They find the account in a book. Who wrote the book? They do not know. What evidence is this? None, unless all things found in books are true.

It is impossible to establish one miracle except by another—and that would have to be established by another still, and so on without end. Human testimony is not sufficient to establish a miracle. Each human being, to be really convinced, must witness the miracle for himself.

They say that Christianity was established, proven to be true, by miracles wrought nearly two thousand years ago. Not one of these miracles can be established except by impudent and ignorant assertion—except by poisoning and deforming the minds of the ignorant and the young. To succeed, the theologians invade the cradle, the nursery. In the brain of innocence they plant the seeds of superstition. They pollute the minds and imaginations of children. They frighten the happy with threats of pain—they soothe the wretched with gilded lies.

This perpetual insincerity stamps itself on the face —affects every feature. We all know the theological countenance,—cold, unsympathetic, cruel, lighted with a pious smirk,—no line of laughter—no dimpled mirth—no touch of humor—nothing human.

This face is a rebuke, a reprimand to natural joy. It says to the happy: "Beware of the dog"—"Prepare for death." This face, like the fabled Gorgon, turns cheerfulness to stone. It is a protest against pleasure—a warning and a threat.

You see every soul is a sculptor that fashions the features, and in this way reveals itself.

Every thought leaves its impress.

The student of this science of theology must be taught in youth,—in his mother's arms. These lies must be sown and planted in his brain the first of all. He must be taught to believe, to accept without question. He must be told that it is wicked to doubt, that it is sinful to inquire—that Faith is a virtue and unbelief a crime.

In this way his mind is poisoned, paralyzed. On all other subjects he has liberty—and in all other directions he is urged to study and think. From his mother's arms he goes to the Sunday school. His poor little mind is filled with miracles and wonders. He is told about a God who made the world

and who rewards and punishes. He is told that this God is the author of the Bible—that Christ is his son. He is told about original sin and the atonement, and he believes what he hears. No reasons are given—no facts—no evidence is presented—nothing but assertion. If he asks questions, he is silenced by more solemn assertions and warned against the devices of the evil one. Every Sunday school is a kind of inquisition where they torture and deform the minds of children—where they force their souls into Catholic or Protestant moulds—and do all they can to destroy the originality, the individuality, and the veracity of the soul. In the theological seminary the destruction is complete.

When the minister leaves the seminary, he is not seeking the truth. He has it. He has a revelation from God, and he has a creed in exact accordance with that revelation. His business is to stand by that revelation and to defend that creed. Arguments against the revelation and the creed he will not read, he will not hear. All facts that are against his religion he will deny. It is impossible for him to be candid. The tremendous "verities" of eternal joy, of everlasting pain are in his creed, and they result from believing the false and denying the true. Investigation is an infinite danger, unbelief is an

infinite offence and deserves and will receive infinite punishment. In the shadow of this tremendous "fact" his courage dies, his manhood is lost, and in his fear he cries out that he believes, whether he does or not.

He says and teaches that credulity is safe and thought dangerous. Yet he pretends to be a teacher—a leader, one selected by God to educate his fellow-men.

These orthodox ministers have been the slanderers of the really great men of our century. They denounced Lyell, the great geologist, for giving facts to the world. They hated and belittled Humboldt, one of the greatest and most intellectual of the race. They ridiculed and derided Darwin, the greatest naturalist, the keenest observer, the best judge of the value of a fact, the most wonderful discoverer of truth that the world has produced.

In every orthodox pulpit stood a traducer of the greatest of scientists—of one who filled the world with intellectual light.

The church has been the enemy of every science, of every real thinker, and for many centuries has used her power to prevent intellectual progress.

Ministers ought to be free. They should be the heralds of the ever coming day, but they are the

bats, the owls that inhabit ruins, that hate the light. They denounce honest men who express their thoughts, as blasphemers, and do what they can to close their mouths. For their Bible they ask the protection of law. They wish to be shielded from laughter by the Legislature. They ask that the arguments of their opponents be answered by the courts. This is the result of a due admixture of cowardice, hypocrisy and malice.

What valuable fact has been proclaimed from an orthodox pulpit? What ecclesiastical council has added to the intellectual wealth of the world?

Many centuries ago the church gave to Christendom a code of laws, stupid, unphilosophic and brutal to the last degree.

The church insists that it has made man merciful and just. Did it do this by torturing heretics—by extinguishing their eyes—by flaying them alive? Did it accomplish this result through the Inquisition—by the use of the thumb-screw, the rack and the fagot? Of what science has the church been the friend and champion? What orthodox church has opened its doors to a persecuted truth? Of what use has Christianity been to man?

They tell us that the church has been and is the friend of education. I deny it. The church founded

colleges not to educate men, but to make proselytes, converts, defenders. This was in accordance with the instinct of self-preservation. No orthodox church ever was, or ever will be in favor of real education. A Catholic is in favor of enough education to make a Catholic out of a savage, and the Protestant is in favor of enough education to make a Protestant out of a Catholic, but both are opposed to the education that makes free and manly men.

So, ministers say that they teach charity. This is natural. They live on alms. All beggars teach that others should give.

So, they tell us that the church has built hospitals. This is not true. Men have not built hospitals because they were Christians, but because they were men. They have not built them for charity—but in self-defence.

If a man comes to your door with the smallpox, you cannot let him in, you cannot kill him. As a necessity, you provide a place for him. And you do this to protect yourself. With this Christianity has had nothing to do.

The church cannot give, because it does not produce. It is claimed that the church has made men and women forgiving. I admit that the church has preached forgiveness, but it has never forgiven an

enemy—never. Against the great and brave thinkers it has coined and circulated countless lies. Never has the church told, or tried to tell, the truth about an honest foe.

The church teaches the existence of the supernatural. It believes in the divine sleight-of-hand—in the "presto" and "open sesame" of the Infinite; in some invisible Being who produces effects without causes and causes without effects; whose caprice governs the world and who can be persuaded by prayer, softened by ceremony, and who will, as a reward for faith, save men from the natural consequences of their actions.

The church denies the eternal, inexorable sequence of events.

WHAT GOOD HAS THE CHURCH ACCOMPLISHED?

It claims to have preached peace because its founder said, "I came not to bring peace but a sword."

It claims to have preserved the family because its founder offered a hundred-fold here and life everlasting to those who would desert wife and children.

So, it claims to have taught the brotherhood of man and that the gospel is for all the world, because Christ said to the woman of Samaria that he came

only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and declared that it was not meet to take the bread of the children and cast it unto dogs.

In the name of Christ, who threatened eternal revenge, it has preached forgiveness.

OF WHAT USE ARE THE ORTHODOX MINISTERS?

They are the enemies of pleasure. They denounce dancing as one of the deadly sins. They are shocked at the wickedness of the waltz—the pollution of the polka. They are the enemies of the theatre. They slander actors and actresses. They hate them because they are rivals. They are trying to preserve the sacredness of the Sabbath. It fills them with malice to see the people happy on that day. They preach against excursions and picnics—against those who seek the woods and the sea, the shadows and the waves. They are filled with holy wrath against bicycles and bloomers. They are opposed to divorces. They insist that for the glory of God, husbands and wives who loathe each other should be compelled to live together. They abhor all works of fiction, and love the Bible. They declare that the literary master-pieces of the world are unfit to be read. They think that the people should be satisfied with sermons and poems about death and hell. They hate art—abhor the marbles of the

Greeks, and all representations of the human form. They want nothing painted or sculptured but hands, faces and clothes. Most of the priests are prudes, and publicly denounce what they secretly admire and enjoy. In the presence of the nude they cover their faces with their holy hands, but keep their fingers apart. They pretend to believe in moral suasion, and want everything regulated by law. If they had the power, they would prohibit everything that men and women really enjoy. They want libraries, museums and art galleries closed on the Sabbath. They would abolish the Sunday paper—stop the running of cars and all public conveyances on the holy day, and compel all the people to enjoy sermons, prayers and psalms.

These dear ministers, when they have poor congregations, thunder against trusts, syndicates, and corporations—against wealth, fashion and luxury. They tell about Dives and Lazarus, paint rich men in hell and beggars in heaven. If their congregations are rich they turn their guns in the other direction.

They have no confidence in education—in the development of the brain. They appeal to hopes and fears. They ask no one to think—to investigate. They insist that all shall believe. Credulity

is the greatest of virtues, and doubt the deadliest of sins.

These men are the enemies of science—of intellectual progress. They ridicule and calumniate the great thinkers. They deny everything that conflicts with the "sacred Scriptures." They still believe in the astronomy of Joshua and the geology of Moses. They believe in the miracles of the past, and deny the demonstrations of the present. They are the foes of facts—the enemies of knowledge. A desire to be happy here, they regard as wicked and worldly —but a desire to be happy in another world, as virtuous and spiritual.

Every orthodox church is founded on mistake and falsehood. Every good orthodox minister asserts what he does not know, and denies what he does know.

### What are the Orthodox Clergy Doing for the Good of Mankind?

Absolutely nothing.

What harm are they doing?

On every hand they sow the seeds of superstition. They paralyze the minds, and pollute the imaginations of children. They fill their hearts with fear. By their teachings, thousands become insane. With them, hypocrisy is respectable and candor infamous.

They enslave the minds of men. Under their teachings men waste and misdirect their energies, abandon the ends that can be accomplished, dedicate their lives to the impossible, worship the unknown, pray to the inconceivable, and become the trembling slaves of a monstrous myth born of ignorance and fashioned by the trembling hands of fear.

Superstition is the serpent that crawls and hisses in every Eden and fastens its poisonous fangs in the hearts of men.

It is the deadliest foe of the human race.

Superstition is a beggar—a robber, a tyrant.

Science is a benefactor.

Superstition sheds blood.

Science sheds light.

The dear preachers must give up the account of creation—the Garden of Eden, the mud-man, the rib-woman, and the walking, talking, snake. They must throw away the apple, the fall of man, the expulsion, and the gate guarded by angels armed with swords. They must give up the flood and the tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues. They must give up Abraham and the wrestling match between Jacob and the Lord. So, the story of Joseph, the enslavement of the Hebrews by the Egyptians, the story of Moses in the bullrushes, the burning bush,

the turning of sticks into serpents, of water into blood, the miraculous creation of frogs, the killing of cattle with hail and changing dust into lice, all must be given up. The sojourn of forty years in the desert, the opening of the Red Sea, the clothes and shoes that refused to wear out, the manna, the quails and the serpents, the water that ran up hill, the talking of Jehovah with Moses face to face, the giving of the Ten Commandments, the opening of the earth to swallow the enemies of Moses—all must be thrown away.

These good preachers must admit that blowing horns could not throw down the walls of a city, that it was horrible for Jephthah to sacrifice his daughter, that the day was not lengthened and the moon stopped for the sake of Joshua, that the dead Samuel was not raised by a witch, that a man was not carried to heaven in a chariot of fire, that the river Jordan was not divided by the stroke of a cloak, that the bears did not destroy children for laughing at a prophet, that a wandering soothsayer did not collect lightnings from heaven to destroy the lives of innocent men, that he did not cause rain and make iron float, that ravens did not keep a hotel where preachers got board and lodging free, that the shadow on a dial was not turned back ten degrees to show that

a king was going to recover from a boil, that Ezekiel was not told by God how to prepare a dinner, that Jonah did not take cabin passage in a fish—and that all the miracles in the old Testament are not allegories, or poems, but just old-fashioned lies. And the dear preachers will be compelled to admit that there never was a miraculous babe without a natural father, that Christ, if he lived, was a man and nothing more. That he did not cast devils out of folks—that he did not cure blindness with spittle and clay, nor turn water into wine, nor make fishes and loaves of bread out of nothing—that he did not know where to catch fishes with money in their mouths—that he did not take a walk on the water—that he did not at will become invisible—that he did not pass through closed doors—that he did not raise the dead—that angels never rolled stones from a sepulchre—that Christ did not rise from the dead and did not ascend to heaven.

All these mistakes and illusions and delusions—all these miracles and myths must fade from the minds of intelligent men.

My dear preachers, I beg you to tell the truth. Tell your congregations that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch. Tell them that nobody knows who wrote the five books. Tell them that Deuter-

onomy was not written until about six hundred years before Christ. Tell them that nobody knows who wrote Joshua, or Judges, or Ruth, Samuel, Kings, or Chronicles, Job, or the Psalms, or the Song of Solomon. Be honest, tell the truth. Tell them that nobody knows who wrote Esther—that Ecclesiastes was written long after Christ—that many of the prophecies were written after the events pretended to be foretold had happened. Tell them that Ezekiel and Daniel were insane. Tell them that nobody knows who wrote the gospels, and tell them that no line about Christ written by a contemporary has been found. Tell them it is all guess—and may be, and perhaps. Be honest. Tell the truth, develop your brains, use all your senses and hold high the torch of Reason.

In a few years the pulpits will be filled with teachers instead of preachers—with thoughtful, brave, and honest men. The congregations will be civilized—intellectually honest and hospitable.

Now, most of the ministers insist that the old falsehoods shall be treated with reverence—that ancient lies with long white beards—wrinkled and bald-headed frauds—round-shouldered and toothless miracles, and palsied mistakes on crutches, shall be called allegories, parables, oriental imagery, inspired

poems. In their presence the ungodly should remove their hats. They should respect the mould and moss of antiquity. They should remember that these lies, these frauds, the miracles and mistakes, have for thousands of years ruled, enslaved, and corrupted the human race.

These ministers ought to know that their creeds are based on imagined facts and demonstrated by assertion.

They ought to know that they have no evidence, —nothing but promises and threats. They ought to know that it is impossible to conceive of force existing without and before matter—that it is equally impossible to conceive of matter without force—that it is impossible to conceive of the creation or destruction of matter or force,—that it is impossible to conceive of infinite intelligence dwelling from eternity in infinite space, and that it is impossible to conceive of the creator, or creation, of substance.

The God of the Christian is an enthroned guess—a perhaps—an inference.

No man, and no body of men, can answer the questions of the Whence and Whither. The mystery of existence cannot be explained by the intellect of man.

Back of life, of existence, we cannot go—beyond death we cannot see. All duties, all obligations, all knowledge, all experience, are for this life, for this world.

We know that men and women and children exist. We know that happiness, for the most part, depends on conduct.

We are satisfied that all the gods are phantoms and that the supernatural does not exist.

We know the difference between hope and knowledge, we hope for happiness here and we dream of joy hereafter, but we do not know. We cannot assert, we can only hope. We can have our dream. In the wide night our star can shine and shed its radiance on the graves of those we love. We can bend above our pallid dead and say that beyond this life there are no sighs—no tears—no breaking hearts.

## CONCLUSION.

LET us be honest. Let us preserve the veracity of our souls. Let education commence in the cradle—in the lap of the loving mother. This is the first school. The teacher, the mother, should be absolutely honest.

The nursery should not be an asylum for lies.

Parents should be modest enough to be truthful—honest enough to admit their ignorance. Nothing should be taught as true that cannot be demonstrated.

Every child should be taught to doubt, to inquire, to demand reasons. Every soul should defend itself—should be on its guard against falsehood, deceit, and mistake, and should beware of all kinds of confidence men, including those in the pulpit.

Children should be taught to express their doubts —to demand reasons. The object of education should be to develop the brain, to quicken the senses. Every school should be a mental gymna-

sium. The child should be equipped for the battle of life. Credulity, implicit obedience, are the virtues of slaves and the enslavers of the free. All should be taught that there is nothing too sacred to be investigated—too holy to be understood.

Each mind has the right to lift all curtains, withdraw all veils, scale all walls, explore all recesses, all heights, all depths for itself, in spite of church or priest, or creed or book.

The great volume of Nature should be open to all. None but the intelligent and honest can really read this book. Prejudice clouds and darkens every page. Hypocrisy reads and misquotes, and credulity accepts the quotation. Superstition cannot read a line or spell the shortest word. And yet this volume holds all knowledge, all truth, and is the only source of thought. Mental liberty means the right of all to read this book. Here the Pope and Peasant are equal. Each must read for himself—and each ought honestly and fearlessly to give to his fellow-men what he learns.

There is no authority in churches or priests—no authority in numbers or majorities. The only authority is Nature—the facts we know. Facts are the masters, the enemies of the ignorant, the servants and friends of the intelligent.

Ignorance is the mother of mystery and misery, of superstition and sorrow, of waste and want.

Intelligence is the only light. It enables us to keep the highway, to avoid the obstructions, and to take advantage of the forces of nature. It is the only lever capable of raising mankind. To develop the brain is to civilize the world. Intelligence reaves the heavens of winged and frightful monsters—drives ghosts and leering fiends from the darkness, and floods with light the dungeons of fear.

All should be taught that there is no evidence of the existence of the supernatural—that the man who bows before an idol of wood or stone is just as foolish as the one who prays to an imagined God,—that all worship has for its foundation the same mistake—the same ignorance, the same fear—that it is just as foolish to believe in a personal god as in a personal devil—just as foolish to believe in great ghosts as little ones.

So, all should be taught that the forces, the facts in Nature, cannot be controlled or changed by prayer or praise, by supplication, ceremony, or sacrifice; that there is no magic, no miracle; that force can be overcome only by force, and that the whole world is natural.

All should be taught that man must protect him-

self—that there is no power superior to Nature that cares for man—that Nature has neither pity nor hatred—that her forces act without the slightest regard for man—that she produces without intention and destroys without regret.

All should be taught that usefulness is the bud and flower and fruit of real religion. The popes and cardinals, the bishops, priests and parsons are all useless. They produce nothing. They live on the labor of others. They are parasites that feed on the frightened. They are vampires that suck the blood of honest toil. Every church is an organized beggar. Every one lives on alms—on alms collected by force and fear. Every orthodox church promises heaven and threatens hell, and these promises and threats are made for the sake of alms, for revenue. Every church cries: "Believe and give."

A new era is dawning on the world. We are beginning to believe in the religion of usefulness.

The men who felled the forests, cultivated the earth, spanned the rivers with bridges of steel, built the railways and canals, the great ships, invented the locomotives and engines, supplying the countless wants of man; the men who invented the telegraphs and cables, and freighted the electric spark with thought and love; the men who invented

the looms and spindles that clothe the world, the inventors of printing and the great presses that fill the earth with poetry, fiction and fact, that save and keep all knowledge for the children yet to be; the inventors of all the wonderful machines that deftly mould from wood and steel the things we use; the men who have explored the heavens and traced the orbits of the stars—who have read the story of the world in mountain range and billowed sea; the men who have lengthened life and conquered pain; the great philosophers and naturalists who have filled the world with light; the great poets whose thoughts have charmed the souls, the great painters and sculptors who have made the canvas speak, the marble live; the great orators who have swayed the world, the composers who have given their souls to sound, the captains of industry, the producers, the soldiers who have battled for the right, the vast host of useful men—these are our Christs, our apostles and our saints. The triumphs of science are our miracles. The books filled with the facts of Nature are our sacred scriptures, and the force that is in every atom and in every star—in everything that lives and grows and thinks, that hopes and suffers, is the only possible god.

The absolute we cannot know—beyond the

horizon of the Natural we cannot go. All our duties are within our reach—all our obligations must be discharged here, in this world. Let us love and labor. Let us wait and work. Let us cultivate courage and cheerfulness—open our hearts to the good—our minds to the true. Let us live free lives. Let us hope that the future will bring peace and joy to all the children of men, and above all, let us preserve the veracity of our souls.

# HOW TO REFORM MANKIND.

# HOW TO REFORM MANKIND.*

## I.

"THERE is no darkness but ignorance." Every human being is a necessary product of conditions, and every one is born with defects for which he cannot be held responsible. Nature seems to care nothing for the individual, nothing for the species.

Life pursuing life and in its turn pursued by death, presses to the snow line of the possible, and every form of life, of instinct, thought and action is fixed and determined by conditions, by countless antecedent and co-existing facts. The present is the child, and the necessary child, of all the past, and the mother of all the future.

Every human being longs to be happy, to satisfy the wants of the body with food, with roof and raiment, and to feed the hunger of the mind, according to his capacity, with love, wisdom, philosophy, art and song.

*This address was delivered before the Militant Church at the Columbia Theatre, Chicago, Ills., April 12, 1896.

The wants of the savage are few; but with civilization the wants of the body increase, the intellectual horizon widens and the brain demands more and more.

The savage feels, but scarcely thinks. The passion of the savage is uninfluenced by his thought, while the thought of the philosopher is uninfluenced by passion. Children have wants and passions before they are capable of reasoning. So, in the infancy of the race, wants and passions dominate.

The savage was controlled by appearances, by impressions; he was mentally weak, mentally indolent, and his mind pursued the path of least resistance. Things were to him as they appeared to be. He was a natural believer in the supernatural, and, finding himself beset by dangers and evils, he sought in many ways the aid of unseen powers. His children followed his example, and for many ages, in many lands, millions and millions of human beings, many of them the kindest and the best, asked for supernatural help. Countless altars and temples have been built, and the supernatural has been worshiped with sacrifice and song, with self-denial, ceremony, thankfulness and prayer.

During all these ages, the brain of man was being slowly and painfully developed. Gradually mind

came to the assistance of muscle, and thought became the friend of labor. Man has advanced just in the proportion that he has mingled thought with his work, just in the proportion that he has succeeded in getting his head and hands into partnership. All this was the result of experience.

Nature, generous and heartless, extravagant and miserly as she is, is our mother and our only teacher, and she is also the deceiver of men. Above her we cannot rise, below her we cannot fall. In her we find the seed and soil of all that is good, of all that is evil. Nature originates, nourishes, preserves and destroys.

Good deeds bear fruit, and in the fruit are seeds that in their turn bear fruit and seeds. Great thoughts are never lost, and words of kindness do not perish from the earth.

Every brain is a field where nature sows the seeds of thought, and the crop depends upon the soil.

Every flower that gives its fragrance to the wandering air leaves its influence on the soul of man. The wheel and swoop of the winged creatures of the air suggest the flowing lines of subtle art. The roar and murmur of the restless sea, the cataract's solemn chant, the thunder's voice, the happy babble of the brook, the whispering leaves, the thrilling

notes of mating birds, the sighing winds, taught man to pour his heart in song and gave a voice to grief and hope, to love and death.

In all that is, in mountain range and billowed plain, in winding stream and desert sand, in cloud and star, in snow and rain, in calm and storm, in night and day, in woods and vales, in all the colors of divided light, in all there is of growth and life, decay and death, in all that flies and floats and swims, in all that moves, in all the forms and qualities of things, man found the seeds and symbols of his thoughts; and all that man has wrought becomes a part of nature's self, forming the lives of those to be. The marbles of the Greeks, like strains of music, suggest the perfect, and teach the melody of life. The great poems, paintings, inventions, theories and philosophies, enlarge and mould the mind of man. All that is is natural. All is naturally produced. Beyond the horizon of the natural man cannot go.

Yet, for many ages, man in all directions has relied upon, and sincerely believed in, the existence of the supernatural. He did not believe in the uniformity of nature; he had no conception of cause and effect, of the indestructibility of force.

In medicine he believed in charms, magic, amu-

lets, and incantations. It never occurred to the savage that diseases were natural.

In chemistry he sought for the elixir of life, for the philosopher's stone, and for some way of changing the baser metals into gold.

In mechanics he searched for perpetual motion, believing that he, by some curious combinations of levers, could produce, could create a force.

In government, he found the source of authority in the will of the supernatural.

For many centuries his only conception of morality was the idea of obedience, not to facts as they exist in nature, but to the supposed command of some being superior to nature. During all these years religion consisted in the praise and worship of the invisible and infinite, of some vast and incomprehensible power, that is to say, of the supernatural.

By experience, by experiment, possibly by accident, man found that some diseases could be cured by natural means; that he could be relieved in many instances of pain by certain kinds of leaves or bark.

This was the beginning. Gradually his confidence increased in the direction of the natural, and began to decrease in charms and amulets, The war was waged for many centuries, but the natural gained

the victory. Now we know that all diseases are naturally produced, and that all remedies, all curatives, act in accordance with the facts in nature. Now we know that charms, magic, amulets and incantations are just as useless in the practice of medicine as they would be in solving a problem in mathematics. We now know that there are no supernatural remedies.

In chemistry the war was long and bitter; but we now no longer seek for the elixir of life, and no one is trying to find the philosopher's stone. We are satisfied that there is nothing supernatural in all the realm of chemistry. We know that substances are always true to their natures; we know that just so many atoms of one substance will unite with just so many of another. The miraculous has departed from chemistry; in that science there is no magic, no caprice and no possible use for the supernatural. We are satisfied that there can be no change, that we can absolutely rely on the uniformity of nature; that the attraction of gravitation will always remain the same; and we feel that we know this as certainly as we know that the relation between the diameter and circumference of a circle can never change.

We now know that in mechanics the natural is supreme. We know that man can by no possibility cre-

ate a force; that by no possibility can he destroy a force. No mechanic dreams of depending upon or asking for any supernatural aid. He knows that he works in accordance with certain facts that no power can change.

So we in the United States believe that the authority to govern, the authority to make and execute laws, comes from the consent of the governed and not from any supernatural source. We do not believe that the king occupied his throne because of the will of the supernatural. Neither do we believe that others are subjects or serfs or slaves by reason of any supernatural will.

So, our ideas of morality have changed, and millions now believe that whatever produces happiness and well-being is in the highest sense moral. Unreasoning obedience is not the foundation or the essence of morality. That is the result of mental slavery. To act in accordance with obligation perceived is to be free and noble. To simply obey is to practice what might be called a slave virtue; but real morality is the flower and fruit of liberty and wisdom.

There are very many who have reached the conclusion that the supernatural has nothing to do with real religion. Religion does not consist in believing

without evidence or against evidence. It does not consist in worshiping the unknown or in trying to do something for the Infinite. Ceremonies, prayers and inspired books, miracles, special providence, and divine interference all belong to the supernatural and form no part of real religion.

Every science rests on the natural, on demonstrated facts. So, morality and religion must find their foundations in the necessary nature of things.

## II.

## How Can We Reform the World?

IGNORANCE being darkness, what we need is intellectual light. The most important things to teach, as the basis of all progress, are that the universe is natural; that man must be the providence of man; that, by the development of the brain, we can avoid some of the dangers, some of the evils, overcome some of the obstructions, and take advantage of some of the facts and forces of nature; that, by invention and industry, we can supply, to a reasonable degree, the wants of the body, and by thought, study and effort, we can in part satisfy the hunger of the mind.

Man should cease to expect any aid from any supernatural source. By this time he should be satisfied that worship has not created wealth, and that prosperity is not the child of prayer. He should know that the supernatural has not succored the oppressed, clothed the naked, fed the hungry, shielded the innocent, stayed the pestilence, or freed the slave.

Being satisfied that the supernatural does not exist, man should turn his entire attention to the affairs of this world, to the facts in nature.

And, first of all, he should avoid waste—waste of energy, waste of wealth. Every good man, every good woman, should try to do away with war, to stop the appeal to savage force. Man in a savage state relies upon his strength, and decides for himself what is right and what is wrong. Civilized men do not settle their differences by a resort to arms. They submit the quarrel to arbitrators and courts. This is the great difference between the savage and the civilized. Nations, however, sustain the relations of savages to each other. There is no way of settling their disputes. Each nation decides for itself, and each nation endeavors to carry its decision into effect. This produces war. Thousands of men at this moment are trying to invent more deadly weapons to destroy their fellow-men. For eighteen hundred years peace has been preached, and yet the civilized nations are the most warlike of the world. There are in Europe to-day between eleven and twelve millions of soldiers, ready to take the field, and the frontiers of every civilized nation are protected by breastwork and fort. The sea is covered with steel clad ships, filled with missiles of death.

The civilized world has impoverished itself, and the debt of Christendom, mostly for war, is now nearly thirty thousand million dollars. The interest on this vast sum has to be paid ; it has to be paid by labor, much of it by the poor, by those who are compelled to deny themselves almost the necessities of life. This debt is growing year by year. There must come a change, or Christendom will become bankrupt.

The interest on this debt amounts at least to nine hundred million dollars a year ; and the cost of supporting armies and navies, of repairing ships, of manufacturing new engines of death, probably amounts, including the interest on the debt, to at least six million dollars a day. Allowing ten hours for a day, that is for a working day, the waste of war is at least six hundred thousand dollars an hour, that is to say, ten thousand dollars a minute.

Think of all this being paid for the purpose of killing and preparing to kill our fellow-men. Think of the good that could be done with this vast sum of money ; the schools that could be built, the wants that could be supplied. Think of the homes it would build, the children it would clothe.

If we wish to do away with war, we must provide for the settlement of national differences by an inter-

national court. This court should be in perpetual session; its members should be selected by the various governments to be affected by its decisions, and, at the command and disposal of this court, the rest of Christendom being disarmed, there should be a military force sufficient to carry its judgments into effect. There should be no other excuse, no other business for an army or a navy in the civilized world.

No man has imagination enough to paint the agonies, the horrors and cruelties of war. Think of sending shot and shell crashing through the bodies of men! Think of the widows and orphans! Think of the maimed, the mutilated, the mangled!

## III.

## ANOTHER WASTE.

LET us be perfectly candid with each other. We are seeking the truth, trying to find what ought to be done to increase the well-being of man. I must give you my honest thought. You have the right to demand it, and I must maintain the integrity of my soul.

There is another direction in which the wealth and energies of man are wasted. From the beginning of history until now man has been seeking the aid of the supernatural. For many centuries the wealth of the world was used to propitiate the unseen powers. In our own country, the property dedicated to this purpose is worth at least one thousand million dollars. The interest on this sum is fifty million dollars a year, and the cost of employing persons, whose business it is to seek the aid of the supernatural and to maintain the property, is certainly as much more. So that the cost in our country is about two million dollars a week, and, counting ten hours as a working

day, this amounts to about five hundred dollars a minute.

For this vast amount of money the returns are remarkably small. The good accomplished does not appear to be great. There is no great diminution in crime. The decrease of immorality and poverty is hardly perceptible. In spite, however, of the apparent failure here, a vast sum of money is expended every year to carry our ideas of the supernatural to other races. Our churches, for the most part, are closed during the week, being used only a part of one day in seven. No one wishes to destroy churches or church organizations. The only desire is that they shall accomplish substantial good for the world. In many of our small towns—towns of three or four thousand people—will be found four or five churches, sometimes more. These churches are founded upon immaterial differences ; a difference as to the mode of baptism ; a difference as to who shall be entitled to partake of the Lord's supper ; a difference of ceremony ; of government ; a difference about fore-ordination ; a difference about fate and free will. And it must be admitted that all the arguments on all sides of these differences have been presented countless millions of times. Upon these subjects nothing new is produced or anticipated, and

yet the discussion is maintained by the repetition of the old arguments.

Now, it seems to me that it would be far better for the people of a town, having a population of four or five thousand, to have one church, and the edifice should be of use, not only on Sunday, but on every day of the week. In this building should be the library of the town. It should be the clubhouse of the people, where they could find the principal newspapers and periodicals of the world. Its auditorium should be like a theatre. Plays should be presented by home talent; an orchestra formed, music cultivated. The people should meet there at any time they desire. The women could carry their knitting and sewing; and connected with it should be rooms for the playing of games, billiards, cards, and chess. Everything should be made as agreeable as possible. The citizens should take pride in this building. They should adorn its niches with statues and its walls with pictures. It should be the intellectual centre. They could employ a gentleman of ability, possibly of genius, to address them on Sundays, on subjects that would be of real interest, of real importance. They could say to this minister:

"We are engaged in business during the week; while we are working at our trades and professions,

we want you to study, and on Sunday tell us what you have found out."

Let such a minister take for a series of sermons the history, the philosophy, the art and the genius of the Greeks. Let him tell of the wondrous metaphysics, myths and religions of India and Egypt. Let him make his congregation conversant with the philosophies of the world, with the great thinkers, the great poets, the great artists, the great actors, the great orators, the great inventors, the captains of industry, the soldiers of progress. Let them have a Sunday school in which the children shall be made acquainted with the facts of nature; with botany, entomology, something of geology and astronomy.

Let them be made familiar with the greatest of poems, the finest paragraphs of literature, with stories of the heroic, the self-denying and generous.

Now, it seems to me that such a congregation in a few years would become the most intelligent people in the United States.

The truth is that people are tired of the old theories. They have lost confidence in the miraculous, in the supernatural, and they have ceased to take interest in "facts" that they do not quite believe.

"There is no darkness but ignorance."

There is no light but intelligence.

As often as we can exchange a mistake for a fact, a falsehood for a truth, we advance. We add to the intellectual wealth of the world, and in this way, and in this way alone, can be laid the foundation for the future prosperity and civilization of the race.

I blame no one; I call in question the motives of no person; I admit that the world has acted as it must.

But hope for the future depends upon the intelligence of the present. Man must husband his resources. He must not waste his energies in endeavoring to accomplish the impossible.

He must take advantage of the forces of nature. He must depend on education, on what he can ascertain by the use of his senses, by observation, by experiment and reason. He must break the chains of prejudice and custom. He must be free to express his thoughts on all questions. He must find the conditions of happiness and become wise enough to live in accordance with them.

## IV.

## How Can We Lessen Crime?

IN spite of all that has been done for the reformation of the world, in spite of all the inventions, in spite of all the forces of nature that are now the tireless slaves of man, in spite of all improvements in agriculture, in mechanics, in every department of human labor, the world is still cursed with poverty and with crime.

The prisons are full, the courts are crowded, the officers of the law are busy, and there seems to be no material decrease in crime.

For many thousands of years man has endeavored to reform his fellow-men by imprisonment, torture, mutilation and death, and yet the history of the world shows that there has been and is no reforming power in punishment. It is impossible to make the penalty great enough, horrible enough to lessen crime.

Only a few years ago, in civilized countries, lar-

ceny and many offences even below larceny, were punished by death; and yet the number of thieves and criminals of all grades increased. Traitors were hanged and quartered or drawn into fragments by horses; and yet treason flourished.

Most of these frightful laws have been repealed, and the repeal certainly did not increase crime. In our own country we rely upon the gallows, the penitentiary and the jail. When a murder is committed, the man is hanged, shocked to death by electricity, or lynched, and in a few minutes a new murderer is ready to suffer a like fate. Men steal; they are sent to the penitentiary for a certain number of years, treated like wild beasts, frequently tortured. At the end of the term they are discharged, having only enough money to return to the place from which they were sent. They are thrown upon the world without means—without friends—they are convicts. They are shunned, suspected and despised. If they obtain a place, they are discharged as soon as it is found that they were in prison. They do the best they can to retain the respect of their fellow-men by denying their imprisonment and their identity. In a little while, unable to gain a living by honest means, they resort to crime, they again appear in court, and again are taken within the dungeon walls. No re-

formation, no chance to reform, nothing to give them bread while making new friends.

All this is infamous. Men should not be sent to the pentitentiary as a punishment, because we must remember that men do as they must. Nature does not frequently produce the perfect. In the human race there is a large percentage of failures. Under certain conditions, with certain appetites and passions and with a certain quality, quantity and shape of brain, men will become thieves, forgers and counterfeiters. The question is whether reformation is possible, whether a change can be produced in the person by producing a change in the conditions. The criminal is dangerous and society has the right to protect itself. The criminal should be confined, and, if possible, should be reformed. A pentitentiary should be a school; the convicts should be educated. So, prisoners should work, and they should be paid a reasonable sum for their labor. The best men should have charge of prisons. They should be philanthropists and philosophers; they should know something of human nature. The prisoner, having been taught, we will say, for five years—taught the underlying principles of conduct, of the naturalness and harmony of virtue, of the discord of crime; having been convinced that society has no hatred, that nobody wishes

to punish, to degrade, or to rob him; and being at the time of his discharge paid a reasonable price for his labor; being allowed by law to change his name, so that his identity will not be preserved, he could go out of the prison a friend of the government. He would have the feeling that he had been made a better man; that he had been treated with justice, with mercy, and the money he carried with him would be a breastwork behind which he could defy temptation, a breastwork that would support and take care of him until he could find some means by which to support himself. And this man, instead of making crime a business, would become a good, honorable and useful citizen.

As it is now, there is but little reform. The same faces appear again and again at the bar; the same men hear again and again the verdict of guilty and the sentence of the court, and the same men return again and again to the prison cell. Murderers, those belonging to the dangerous classes, those who are so formed by nature that they rush to the crimes of desperation, should be imprisoned for life; or they should be put upon some island, some place where they can be guarded, where it may be that by proper effort they could support themselves; the men on one island, the women on another. And to these

islands should be sent professional criminals, those who have deliberately adopted a life of crime for the purpose of supporting themselves, the women upon one island, the men upon another. Such people should not populate the earth.

Neither the diseases nor the deformities of the mind or body should be perpetuated. Life at the fountain should not be polluted.

## V.

## HOMES FOR ALL.

THE home is the unit of the nation. The more homes the broader the foundation of the nation and the more secure.

Everything that is possible should be done to keep this from being a nation of tenants. The men who cultivate the earth should own it. Something has already been done in our country in that direction, and probably in every State there is a homestead exemption. This exemption has thus far done no harm to the creditor class. When we imprisoned people for debt, debts were as insecure, to say the least, as now. By the homestead laws, a home of a certain value or of a certain extent, is exempt from forced levy or sale; and these laws have done great good. Undoubtedly they have trebled the homes of the nation.

I wish to go a step further. I want, if possible, to get the people out of the tenements, out of the gutters of degradation, to homes where there can be privacy,

where these people can feel that they are in partnership with nature; that they have an interest in good government. With the means we now have of transportation, there is no necessity for poor people being huddled in festering masses in the vile, filthy and loathsome parts of cities, where poverty breeds rags, and the rags breed diseases. I would exempt a homestead of a reasonable value, say of the value of two or three thousand dollars, not only from sale under execution, but from sale for taxes of every description. These homes should be absolutely exempt; they should belong to the family, so that every mother should feel that the roof above her head was hers; that her house was her castle, and that in its possession she could not be disturbed, even by the nation. Under certain conditions I would allow the sale of this homestead, and exempt the proceeds of the sale for a certain time, during which they might be invested in another home; and all this could be done to make a nation of householders, a nation of land-owners, a nation of home-builders. I would invoke the same power to preserve these homes, and to acquire these homes, that I would invoke for acquiring lands for building railways. Every State should fix the amount of land that could be owned by an individual, not liable to be taken

from him for the purpose of giving a home to another, and when any man owned more acres than the law allowed, and another should ask to purchase them, and he should refuse, I would have the law so that the person wishing to purchase could file his petition in court. The court would appoint commissioners, or a jury would be called, to determine the value of the land the petitioner wished for a home, and, upon the amount being paid, found by such commission, or jury, the land should vest absolutely in the petitioner.

This right of eminent domain should be used not only for the benefit of the person wishing a home, but for the benefit of all the people. Nothing is more important to America than that the babes of America should be born around the firesides of homes.

There is another question in which I take great interest, and it ought, in my judgment, to be answered by the intelligence and kindness of our century.

We all know that for many, many ages, men have been slaves, and we all know that during all these years, women have, to some extent been the slaves of slaves. It is of the utmost importance to the human race that women, that mothers, should be free. Without doubt, the contract of marriage

is the most important and the most sacred that human beings can make. Marriage is the most important of all institutions. Of course, the ceremony of marriage is not the real marriage. It is only evidence of the mutual flames that burn within. There can be no real marriage without mutual love. So I believe in the ceremony of marriage, that it should be public; that records should be kept. Besides, the ceremony says to all the world that those who marry are in love with each other.

Then arises the question of divorce. Millions of people imagine that the married are joined together by some supernatural power, and that they should remain together, or at least married, during life. If all who have been married were joined together by the supernatural, we must admit that the supernatural is not infinitely wise.

After all, marriage is a contract, and the parties to the contract are bound to keep its provisions; and neither should be released from such a contract unless, in some way, the interests of society are involved. I would have the law so that any husband could obtain a divorce when the wife had persistently and flagrantly violated the contract; such divorce to be granted on equitable terms. I would

give the wife a divorce if she requested it, if she wanted it.

And I would do this, not only for her sake, but for the sake of the community, of the nation. All children should be children of love. All that are born should be sincerely welcomed. The children of mothers who dislike, or hate, or loathe the fathers, will fill the world with insanity and crime. No woman should by law, or by public opinion, be forced to live with a man whom she abhors. There is no danger of demoralizing the world through divorce. Neither is there any danger of destroying in the human heart that divine thing called love. As long as the human race exists, men and women will love each other, and just so long there will be true and perfect marriage. Slavery is not the soil or rain of virtue.

I make a difference between granting divorce to a man and to a woman, and for this reason : A woman dowers her husband with her youth and beauty. He should not be allowed to desert her because she has grown wrinkled and old. Her capital is gone ; her prospects in life lessened ; while, on the contrary, he may be far better able to succeed than when he married her. As a rule, the man can take care of himself, and as a rule, the woman needs help. So, I

would not allow him to cast her off unless she had flagrantly violated the contract. But, for the sake of the community, and especially for the sake of the babes, I would give her a divorce for the asking.

There will never be a generation of great men until there has been a generation of free women—of free mothers.

The tenderest word in our language is maternity. In this word is the divine mingling of ecstasy and agony—of love and self-sacrifice. This word is holy!

## VI.

## THE LABOR QUESTION.

THERE has been for many years ceaseless discussion upon what is called the labor question; the conflict between the workingman and the capitalist. Many ways have been devised, some experiments have been tried for the purpose of solving this question. Profit-sharing would not work, because it is impossible to share profits with those who are incapable of sharing losses. Communities have been formed, the object being to pay the expenses and share the profits among all the persons belonging to the society. For the most part these have failed.

Others have advocated arbitration. And, while it may be that the employers could be bound by the decision of the arbitrators, there has been no way discovered by which the employees could be held by such decision. In other words, the question has not been solved.

For my own part, I see no final and satisfactory

solution except through the civilization of employers and employed. The question is so complicated, the ramifications are so countless, that a solution by law, or by force, seems at least improbable. Employers are supposed to pay according to their profits. They may or may not. Profits may be destroyed by competition. The employer is at the mercy of other employers, and as much so as his employees are at his mercy. The employers cannot govern prices; they cannot fix demand; they cannot control supply; and at present, in the world of trade, the laws of supply and demand, except when interfered with by conspiracy, are in absolute control.

Will the time arrive, and can it arrive, except by developing the brain, except by the aid of intellectual light, when the purchaser will wish to give what a thing is worth, when the employer will be satisfied with a reasonable profit, when the employer will be anxious to give the real value for raw material; when he will be really anxious to pay the laborer the full value of his labor? Will the employer ever become civilized enough to know that the law of supply and demand should not absolutely apply in the labor market of the world? Will he ever become civilized enough not to take advantage of the necessities of the poor, of the hunger and rags and want

of poverty? Will he ever become civilized enough to say: "I will pay the man who labors for me enough to give him a reasonable support, enough for him to assist in taking care of wife and children, enough for him to do this, and lay aside something to feed and clothe him when old age comes; to lay aside something, enough to give him house and hearth during the December of his life, so that he can warm his worn and shriveled hands at the fire of home"?

Of course, capital can do nothing without the assistance of labor. All there is of value in the world is the product of labor. The laboring man pays all the expenses. No matter whether taxes are laid on luxuries or on the necessaries of life, labor pays every cent.

So we must remember that, day by day, labor is becoming intelligent. So, I believe the employer is gradually becoming civilized, gradually becoming kinder; and many men who have made large fortunes from the labor of their fellows have given of their millions to what they regarded as objects of charity, or for the interests of education. This is a kind of penance, because the men that have made this money from the brain and muscle of their fellow-men have ever felt that it was not quite their own. Many of

these employers have sought to balance their accounts by leaving something for universities, for the establishment of libraries, drinking fountains, or to build monuments to departed greatness. It would have been, I think, far better had they used this money to better the condition of the men who really earned it.

So, I think that when we become civilized, great corporations will make provision for men who have given their lives to their service. I think the great railroads should pay pensions to their worn out employees. They should take care of them in old age. They should not maim and wear out their servants and then discharge them, and allow them to be supported in poorhouses. These great companies should take care of the men they maim; they should look out for the ones whose lives they have used and whose labor has been the foundation of their prosperity. Upon this question, public sentiment should be aroused to such a degree that these corporations would be ashamed to use a human life and then throw away the broken old man as they would cast aside a rotten tie.

It may be that the mechanics, the workingmen, will finally become intelligent enough to really unite, to act in absolute concert. Could this be accom-

plished, then a reasonable rate of compensation could be fixed and enforced. Now such efforts are local, and the result up to this time has been failure. But, if all could unite, they could obtain what is reasonable, what is just, and they would have the sympathy of a very large majority of their fellow-men, provided they were reasonable.

But, before they can act in this way, they must become really intelligent, intelligent enough to know what is reasonable and honest enough to ask for no more.

So much has already been accomplished for the workingman that I have hope, and great hope, of the future. The hours of labor have been shortened, and materially shortened, in many countries. There was a time when men worked fifteen and sixteen hours a day. Now, generally, a day's work is not longer than ten hours, and the tendency is to still further decrease the hours.

By comparing long periods of time, we more clearly perceive the advance that has been made. In 1860, the average amount earned by the laboring men, workmen, mechanics, per year, was about two hundred and eighty-five dollars. It is now about five hundred dollars, and a dollar to-day will purchase more of the necessaries of life, more food,

clothing and fuel, than it would in 1860. These facts are full of hope for the future.

All our sympathies should be with the men who work, who toil; for the women who labor for themselves and children; because we know that labor is the foundation of all, and that those who labor are the Caryatides that support the structure and glittering dome of civilization and progress.

## VII.

## EDUCATE THE CHILDREN.

EVERY child should be taught to be self-supporting, and every one should be taught to avoid being a burden on others, as they would shun death.

Every child should be taught that the useful are the honorable, and that they who live on the labor of others are the enemies of society. Every child should be taught that useful work is worship and that intelligent labor is the highest form of prayer.

Children should be taught to think, to investigate, to rely upon the light of reason, of observation and experience; should be taught to use all their senses; and they should be taught only that which in some sense is really useful. They should be taught the use of tools, to use their hands, to embody their thoughts in the construction of things. Their lives should not be wasted in the acquisition of the useless, or of the almost useless. Years should not be

devoted to the acquisition of dead languages, or to the study of history which, for the most part, is a detailed account of things that never occurred. It is useless to fill the mind with dates of great battles, with the births and deaths of kings. They should be taught the philosophy of history, the growth of nations, of philosophies, theories, and, above all, of the sciences.

So, they should be taught the importance, not only of financial, but of mental honesty; to be absolutely sincere; to utter their real thoughts, and to give their actual opinions; and, if parents want honest children, they should be honest themselves. It may be that hypocrites transmit their failing to their offspring. Men and women who pretend to agree with the majority, who think one way and talk another, can hardly expect their children to be absolutely sincere.

Nothing should be taught in any school that the teacher does not know. Beliefs, superstitions, theories, should not be treated like demonstrated facts. The child should be taught to investigate, not to believe. Too much doubt is better than too much credulity. So, children should be taught that it is their duty to think for themselves, to understand, and, if possible, to know.

Real education is the hope of the future. The development of the brain, the civilization of the heart, will drive want and crime from the world. The schoolhouse is the real cathedral, and science the only possible savior of the human race. Education, real education, is the friend of honesty, of morality, of temperance.

We cannot rely upon legislative enactments to make people wise and good; neither can we expect to make human beings manly and womanly by keeping them out of temptation. Temptations are as thick as the leaves of the forest, and no one can be out of the reach of temptation unless he is dead. The great thing is to make people intelligent enough and strong enough, not to keep away from temptation, but to resist it. All the forces of civilization are in favor of morality and temperance. Little can be accomplished by law, because law, for the most part, about such things, is a destruction of personal liberty. Liberty cannot be sacrificed for the sake of temperance, for the sake of morality, or for the sake of anything. It is of more value than everything else. Yet some people would destroy the sun to prevent the growth of weeds. Liberty sustains the same relation to all the virtues that the sun does to life. The world had better go back to barbarism, to

the dens, the caves and lairs of savagery; better lose all art, all inventions, than to lose liberty. Liberty is the breath of progress; it is the seed and soil, the heat and rain of love and joy.

So, all should be taught that the highest ambition is to be happy, and to add to the well-being of others; that place and power are not necessary to success; that the desire to acquire great wealth is a kind of insanity. They should be taught that it is a waste of energy, a waste of thought, a waste of life, to acquire what you do not need and what you do not really use for the benefit of yourself or others.

Neither mendicants nor millionaires are the happiest of mankind. The man at the bottom of the ladder hopes to rise; the man at the top fears to fall. The one asks; the other refuses; and, by frequent refusal, the heart becomes hard enough and the hand greedy enough to clutch and hold.

Few men have intelligence enough, real greatness enough, to own a great fortune. As a rule, the fortune owns them. Their fortune is their master, for whom they work and toil like slaves. The man who has a good business and who can make a reasonable living and lay aside something for the future, who can educate his children and can leave enough to

keep the wolf of want from the door of those he loves, ought to be the happiest of men.

Now, society bows and kneels at the feet of wealth. Wealth gives power. Wealth commands flattery and adulation. And so, millions of men give all their energies, as well as their very souls, for the acquisition of gold. And this will continue as long as society is ignorant enough and hypocritical enough to hold in high esteem the man of wealth without the slightest regard to the character of the man.

In judging of the rich, two things should be considered: How did they get it, and what are they doing with it? Was it honestly acquired? Is it being used for the benefit of mankind? When people become really intelligent, when the brain is really developed, no human being will give his life to the acquisition of what he does not need or what he cannot intelligently use.

The time will come when the truly intelligent man cannot be happy, cannot be satisfied, when millions of his fellow-men are hungry and naked. The time will come when in every heart will be the perfume of pity's sacred flower. The time will come when the world will be anxious to ascertain the truth, to find out the conditions of happiness, and to live in ac-

cordance with such conditions; and the time will come when in the brain of every human being will be the climate of intellectual hospitality.

Man will be civilized when the passions are dominated by the intellect, when reason occupies the throne, and when the hot blood of passion no longer rises in successful revolt.

To civilize the world, to hasten the coming of the Golden Dawn of the Perfect Day, we must educate the children, we must commence at the cradle, at the lap of the loving mother.

## VIII.

## WE MUST WORK AND WAIT.

THE reforms that I have mentioned cannot be accomplished in a day, possibly not for many centuries; and in the meantime there is much crime, much poverty, much want, and consequently something must be done now.

Let each human being, within the limits of the possible be self-supporting; let every one take intelligent thought for the morrow; and if a human being supports himself and acquires a surplus, let him use a part of that surplus for the unfortunate; and let each one to the extent of his ability help his fellow-men. Let him do what he can in the circle of his own acquaintance to rescue the fallen, to help those who are trying to help themselves, to give work to the idle. Let him distribute kind words, words of wisdom, of cheerfulness and hope. In other words, let every human being do all the good he can, and let him bind up the wounds of his fellow-

creatures, and at the same time put forth every effort, to hasten the coming of a better day.

This, in my judgment, is real religion. To do all the good you can is to be a saint in the highest and in the noblest sense. To do all the good you can; this is to be really and truly spiritual. To relieve suffering, to put the star of hope in the midnight of despair, this is true holiness. This is the religion of science. The old creeds are too narrow, they are not for the world in which we live. The old dogmas lack breadth and tenderness; they are too cruel, too merciless, too savage. We are growing grander and nobler.

The firmament inlaid with suns is the dome of the real cathedral. The interpreters of nature are the true and only priests. In the great creed are all the truths that lips have uttered, and in the real litany will be found all the ecstasies and aspirations of the soul, all dreams of joy, all hopes for nobler, fuller life. The real church, the real edifice, is adorned and glorified with all that Art has done. In the real choir is all the thrilling music of the world, and in the star-lit aisles have been, and are, the grandest souls of every land and clime.

"There is no darkness but ignorance."

Let us flood the world with intellectual light.

# A THANKSGIVING SERMON.

## A THANKSGIVING SERMON.

MANY ages ago our fathers were living in dens and caves. Their bodies, their low foreheads, were covered with hair. They were eating berries, roots, bark and vermin. They were fond of snakes and raw fish. They discovered fire and, probably by accident, learned how to cause it by friction. They found how to warm themselves—to fight the frost and storm. They fashioned clubs and rude weapons of stone with which they killed the larger beasts and now and then each other. Slowly, painfully, almost imperceptibly they advanced. They crawled and stumbled, staggered and struggled toward the light. To them the world was unknown. On every hand was the mysterious, the sinister, the hurtful. The forests were filled with monsters, and the darkness was crowded with ghosts, devils, and fiendish gods.

These poor wretches were the slaves of fear, the sport of dreams.

Now and then, one rose a little above his fellows —used his senses—the little reason that he had—found something new—some better way. Then the people killed him and afterward knelt with reverence at his grave. Then another thinker gave his thought—was murdered—another tomb became sacred—another step was taken in advance. And so through countless years of ignorance and cruelty—of thought and crime—of murder and worship, of heroism, suffering, and self-denial, the race has reached the heights where now we stand.

Looking back over the long and devious roads that lie between the barbarism of the past and the civilization of to-day, thinking of the centuries that rolled like waves between these distant shores, we can form some idea of what our fathers suffered—of the mistakes they made—some idea of their ignorance, their stupidity—and some idea of their sense, their goodness, their heroism.

It is a long road from the savage to the scientist—from a den to a mansion—from leaves to clothes —from a flickering rush to the arc-light—from a hammer of stone to the modern mill—a long distance from the pipe of Pan to the violin—to the orchestra —from a floating log to the steamship—from a sickle to a reaper—from a flail to a threshing machine—

from a crooked stick to a plow—from a spinning wheel to a spinning jenny—from a hand loom to a Jacquard—a Jacquard that weaves fair forms and wondrous flowers beyond Arachne's utmost dream—from a few hieroglyphics on the skins of beasts—on bricks of clay—to a printing press, to a library—a long distance from the messenger, traveling on foot, to the electric spark—from knives and tools of stone to those of steel—a long distance from sand to telescopes—from echo to the phonograph, the phonograph that buries in indented lines and dots the sounds of living speech, and then gives back to life the very words and voices of the dead—a long way from the trumpet to the telephone, the telephone that transports speech as swift as thought and drops the words, perfect as minted coins, in listening ears—a long way from a fallen tree to the suspension bridge—from the dried sinews of beasts to the cables of steel—from the oar to the propeller—from the sling to the rifle—from the catapult to the cannon—a long distance from revenge to law—from the club to the Legislature—from slavery to freedom—from appearance to fact—from fear to reason.

And yet the distance has been traveled by the human race. Countless obstructions have been overcome—numberless enemies have been conquered—

thousands and thousands of victories have been won for the right, and millions have lived, labored and died for their fellow-men.

For the blessings we enjoy—for the happiness that is ours, we ought to be grateful. Our hearts should blossom with thankfulness.

Whom, what, should we thank?

Let us be honest—generous.

Should we thank the church?

Christanity has controlled Christendom for at least fifteen hundred years.

During these centuries what have the orthodox churches accomplished, for the good of man?

In this life man needs raiment and roof, food and fuel. He must be protected from heat and cold, from snow and storm. He must take thought for the morrow. In the summer of youth he must prepare for the winter of age. He must know something of the causes of disease—of the conditions of health. If possible he must conquer pain, increase happiness and lengthen life. He must supply the wants of the body—and feed the hunger of the mind.

What good has the church done?

Has it taught men to cultivate the earth? to build homes? to weave cloth? to cure or prevent disease?

to build ships, to navigate the seas? to conquer pain, or to lengthen life?

Did Christ or any of his apostles add to the sum of useful knowledge? Did they say one word in favor of any science, of any art? Did they teach their fellow-men how to make a living, how to overcome the obstructions of nature, how to prevent sickness—how to protect themselves from pain, from famine, from misery and rags?

Did they explain any of the phenomena of nature? any of the facts that affect the life of man? Did they say anything in favor of investigation—of study—of thought? Did they teach the gospel of self-reliance, of industry—of honest effort? Can any farmer, mechanic, or scientist find in the New Testament one useful fact? Is there anything in the sacred book that can help the geologist, the astronomer, the biologist, the physician, the inventor —the manufacturer of any useful thing?

What has the church done?

From the very first it taught the vanity—the worthlessness of all earthly things. It taught the wickedness of wealth, the blessedness of poverty. It taught that the business of this life was to prepare for death. It insisted that a certain belief was necessary to insure salvation, and that all who failed

to believe, or doubted in the least would suffer eternal pain. According to the church the natural desires, ambitions and passions of man were all wicked and depraved.

To love God, to practice self-denial, to overcome desire, to despise wealth, to hate prosperity, to desert wife and children, to live on roots and berries, to repeat prayers, to wear rags, to live in filth, and drive love from the heart—these, for centuries, were the highest and most perfect virtues, and those who practiced them were saints.

The saints did not assist their fellow-men. Their fellow-men assisted them. They did not labor for others. They were beggars—parasites—vermin. They were insane. They followed the teachings of Christ. They took no thought for the morrow. They mutilated their bodies—scarred their flesh and destroyed their minds for the sake of happiness in another world. During the journey of life they kept their eyes on the grave. They gathered no flowers by the way—they walked in the dust of the road—avoided the green fields. Their moans made all the music they wished to hear. The babble of brooks, the songs of birds, the laughter of children, were nothing to them. Pleasure was the child of sin, and the happy needed a change of heart. They were

sinless and miserable—but they had faith—they were pious and wretched—but they were limping towards heaven.

What has the church done?

It has denounced pride and luxury—all things that adorn and enrich life—all the pleasures of sense—the ecstasies of love—the happiness of the hearth—the clasp and kiss of wife and child.

And the church has done this because it regarded this life as a period of probation—a time to prepare—to become spiritual—to overcome the natural—to fix the affections on the invisible—to become passionless—to subdue the flesh—to congeal the blood—to fold the wings of fancy—to become dead to the world—so that when you appeared before God you would be the exact opposite of what he made you.

What has the church done?

It pretended to have a revelation from God. It knew the road to eternal joy, the way to death. It preached salvation by faith, and declared that only orthodox believers could become angels, and all doubters would be damned. It knew this, and so knowing it became the enemy of discussion, of investigation, of thought. Why investigate, why discuss, why think when you know? It sought to enslave the world. It appealed to force. It unsheathed the

sword, lighted the fagot, forged the chain, built the dungeon, erected the scaffold, invented and used the instruments of torture. It branded, maimed and mutilated—it imprisoned and tortured—it blinded and burned, hanged and crucified, and utterly destroyed millions and millions of human beings. It touched every nerve of the body—produced every pain that can be felt, every agony that can be endured.

And it did all this to preserve what it called the truth—to destroy heresy and doubt, and to save, if possible, the souls of a few. It was honest. It was necessary to prevent the development of the brain—to arrest all progress—and to do this the church used all its power. If men were allowed to think and express their thoughts they would fill their minds and the minds of others with doubts. If they were allowed to think they would investigate, and then they might contradict the creed, dispute the words of priests and defy the church. The priests cried to the people: "It is for us to talk. It is for you to hear. Our duty is to preach and yours is to believe."

What has the church done?

There have been thousands of councils and synods —thousands and thousands of occasions when the

clergy have met and discussed and quarreled—when pope and cardinals, bishops and priests have added to or explained their creeds—and denied the rights of others. What useful truth did they discover? What fact did they find? Did they add to the intellectual wealth of the world? Did they increase the sum of knowledge?

I admit that they looked over a number of Jewish books and picked out the ones that Jehovah wrote.

Did they find the medicinal virtue that dwells in any weed or flower?

I know that they decided that the Holy Ghost was not created—not begotten—but that he proceeded.

Did they teach us the mysteries of the metals and how to purify the ores in furnace flames?

They shouted: "Great is the mystery of Godliness."

Did they show us how to improve our condition in this world?

They informed us that Christ had two natures and two wills.

Did they give us even a hint as to any useful thing?

They gave us predestination, foreordination and just enough "free will" to go to hell.

Did they discover or show us how to produce anything for food?

Did they produce anything to satisfy the hunger of man?

Instead of this they discovered that a peasant girl who lived in Palestine, was the mother of God. This they proved by a book, and to make the book evidence they called it inspired.

Did they tell us anything about chemistry—how to combine and separate substances—how to subtract the hurtful—how to produce the useful?

They told us that bread, by making certain motions and mumbling certain prayers, could be changed into the flesh of God, and that in the same way wine could be changed to his blood. And this, notwithstanding the fact that God never had any flesh or blood, but has always been a spirit without body, parts or passions.

What has the church done?

It gave us the history of the world—of the stars, and the beginning of all things. It taught the geology of Moses—the astronomy of Joshua and Elijah. It taught the fall of man and the atonement—proved that a Jewish peasant was God—established the existence of hell, purgatory and heaven.

It pretended to have a revelation from God—the

Scriptures, in which could be found all knowledge—everything that man could need in the journey of life. Nothing outside of the inspired book—except legends and prayers—could be of any value. Books that contradicted the Bible were hurtful, those that agreed with it—useless. Nothing was of importance except faith, credulity—belief. The church said: "Let philosophy alone, count your beads. Ask no questions, fall upon your knees. Shut your eyes, and save your souls."

What has the church done?

For centuries it kept the earth flat, for centuries it made all the hosts of heaven travel around this world—for centuries it clung to "sacred" knowledge, and fought facts with the ferocity of a fiend. For centuries it hated the useful. It was the deadly enemy of medicine. Disease was produced by devils and could be cured only by priests, decaying bones, and holy water. Doctors were the rivals of priests. They diverted the revenues.

The church opposed the study of anatomy—was against the dissection of the dead. Man had no right to cure disease—God would do that through his priests.

Man had no right to prevent disease—diseases were sent by God as judgments.

The church opposed inoculation—vaccination, and the use of chloroform and ether. It was declared to be a sin, a crime for a woman to lessen the pangs of motherhood. The church declared that woman must bear the curse of the merciful Jehovah.

What has the church done?

It taught that the insane were inhabited by devils. Insanity was not a disease. It was produced by demons. It could be cured by prayers—gifts, amulets and charms. All these had to be paid for. This enriched the church. These ideas were honestly entertained by Protestants as well as Catholics—by Luther, Calvin, Knox and Wesley.

What has the church done?

It taught the awful doctrine of witchcraft. It filled the darkness with demons—the air with devils, and the world with grief and shame. It charged men, women and children with being in league with Satan to injure their fellows. Old women were convicted for causing storms at sea—for preventing rain and for bringing frost. Girls were convicted for having changed themselves into wolves, snakes and toads. These witches were burned for causing diseases—for selling their souls and for souring beer. All these things were done with the aid of the Devil who

sought to persecute the faithful, the lambs of God. Satan sought in many ways to scandalize the church. He sometimes assumed the appearance of a priest and committed crimes.

On one occasion he personated a bishop—a bishop renowned for his sanctity—allowed himself to be discovered and dragged from the room of a beautiful widow. So perfectly did he counterfeit the features and form of the bishop, that many who were well acquainted with the prelate, were actually deceived, and the widow herself thought her lover was the bishop. All this was done by the Devil to bring reproach upon holy men.

Hundreds of like instances could be given, as the war waged between demons and priests was long and bitter.

These popes and priests—these clergymen, were not hypocrites. They believed in the New Testament—in the teachings of Christ, and they knew that the principal business of the Savior was casting out devils.

What has the church done?

It made the wife a slave—the property of the husband, and it placed the husband as much above the wife as Christ was above the husband. It taught that a nun is purer, nobler than a mother. It induced

millions of pure and conscientious girls to renounce the joys of life—to take the veil woven of night and death, to wear the habiliments of the dead—made them believe that they were the brides of Christ.

For my part, I would as soon be a widow as the bride of a man who had been dead for eighteen hundred years.

The poor deluded girls imagined that they, in some mysterious way, were in spiritual wedlock united with God. All worldly desires were driven from their hearts. They filled their lives with fastings—with prayers—with self-accusings. They forgot fathers and mothers and gave their love to the invisible. They were the victims, the convicts of superstition—prisoners in the penitentiaries of God. Conscientious, good, sincere—insane.

These loving women gave their hearts to a phantom, their lives to a dream.

A few years ago, at a revival, a fine buxom girl was "converted," "born again." In her excitement she cried, "I'm married to Christ—I'm married to Christ." In her delirium she threw her arms around the neck of an old man and again cried, "I'm married to Christ." The old man, who happened to be a kind of skeptic, gently removed her hands, saying at the same time: "I don't know much about your

husband, but I have great respect for your father-in-law."

Priests, theologians, have taken advantage of women—of their gentleness—their love of approbation. They have lived upon their hopes and fears. Like vampires, they have sucked their blood. They have made them responsible for the sins of the world. They have taught them the slave virtues—meekness, humility—implicit obedience. They have fed their minds with mistakes, mysteries and absurdities. They have endeavored to weaken and shrivel their brains, until, to them, there would be no possible connection between evidence and belief—between fact and faith.

What has the church done?

It was the enemy of commerce—of business. It denounced the taking of interest for money. Without taking interest for money, progress is impossible. The steamships, the great factories, the railroads have all been built with borrowed money, money on which interest was promised and for the most part paid.

The church was opposed to fire insurance—to life insurance. It denounced insurance in any form as gambling, as immoral. To insure your life was to declare that you had no confidence in God—that you

relied on a corporation instead of divine providence. It was declared that God would provide for your widow and your fatherless children.

To insure your life was to insult heaven.

What has the church done?

The church regarded epidemics as the messengers of the good God. The "Black Death" was sent by the eternal Father, whose mercy spared some and whose justice murdered the rest. To stop the scourge, they tried to soften the heart of God by kneelings and prostrations — by processions and prayers—by burning incense and by making vows. They did not try to remove the cause. The cause was God. They did not ask for pure water, but for holy water. Faith and filth lived or rather died together. Religion and rags, piety and pollution kept company.

Sanctity kept its odor.

What has the church done?

It was the enemy of art and literature. It destroyed the marbles of Greece and Rome. Beauty was Pagan. It destroyed so far as it could the best literature of the world. It feared thought—but it preserved the Scriptures, the ravings of insane saints, the falsehoods of the Fathers, the bulls of popes, the accounts of miracles performed by shrines, by dried

blood and faded hair, by pieces of bones and wood, by rusty nails and thorns, by handkerchiefs and rags, by water and beads and by a finger of the Holy Ghost.

This was the literature of the church.

I admit that the priests were honest—as honest as ignorant. More could not be said.

What has the church done?

Christianity claims, with great pride, that it established asylums for the insane. Yes, it did. But the insane were treated as criminals. They were regarded as the homes—as the tenement-houses of devils. They were persecuted and tormented. They were chained and flogged, starved and killed. The asylums were prisons, dungeons, the insane were victims and the keepers were ignorant, conscientious, pious fiends. They were not trying to help men, they were fighting devils—destroying demons. They were not actuated by love—but by hate and fear.

What has the church done?

It founded schools where facts were denied, where science was denounced and philosophy despised. Schools, where priests were made—where they were taught to hate reason and to look upon doubts as the suggestions of the Devil. Schools where the heart was hardened and the brain shriveled. Schools in

which lies were sacred and truths profane. Schools for the more general diffusion of ignorance—schools to prevent thought—to suppress knowledge. Schools for the purpose of enslaving the world. Schools in which teachers knew less than pupils.

What has the church done?

It has used its influence with God to get rain and sunshine—to stop flood and storm—to kill insects, rats, snakes and wild beasts—to stay pestilence and famine—to delay frost and snow—to lengthen the lives of kings and queens—to protect presidents—to give legislators wisdom—to increase collections and subscriptions. In marriages it has made God the party of the third part. It has sprinkled water on babes when they were named. It has put oil on the dying and repeated prayers for the dead. It has tried to protect the people from the malice of the Devil—from ghosts and spooks, from witches and wizards and all the leering fiends that seek to poison the souls of men. It has endeavored to protect the sheep of God from the wolves of science—from the wild beasts of doubt and investigation. It has tried to wean the lambs of the Lord from the delights, the pleasures, the joys, of life. According to the philosophy of the church, the virtuous weep and suffer, the vicious laugh and thrive, the good carry a cross,

and the wicked fly. But in the next life this will be reversed. Then the good will be happy, and the bad will be damned.

The church filled the world with faith and crime.

It polluted the fountains of joy. It gave us an ignorant, jealous, revengeful and cruel God—sometimes merciful—sometimes ferocious. Now just, now infamous—sometimes wise—generally foolish. It gave us a Devil, cunning, malicious, almost the equal of God, not quite as strong—but quicker—not as profound—but sharper.

It gave us angels with wings—cherubim and seraphim and a heaven with harps and hallelujahs—with streets of gold and gates of pearl.

It gave us fiends and imps with wings like bats. It gave us ghosts and goblins, spooks and sprites, and little devils that swarmed in the bodies of men, and it gave us hell where the souls of men will roast in eternal flames. Shall we thank the church? Shall we thank the orthodox churches?

Shall we thank them for the hell they made here? Shall we thank them for the hell of the future?

## II.

WE must remember that the church was founded and has been protected by God, that all the popes, and cardinals, all the bishops, priests and monks, all the ministers and exhorters were selected and set apart—all sanctified and enlightened by the infinite God—that the Holy Scriptures were inspired by the same Being, and that all the orthodox creeds were really made by him.

We know what these men—filled with the Holy Ghost—have done. We know the part they have played. We know the souls they have saved and the bodies they have destroyed. We know the consolation they have given and the pain they have inflicted—the lies they have defended—the truths they have denied. We know that they convinced millions that celibacy is the greatest of all virtues—that women are perpetual temptations, the enemies of true holiness—that monks and priests are nobler than fathers, that nuns are purer than mothers. We know

that they taught the blessed absurdity of the Trinity —that God once worked at the trade of a carpenter in Palestine. We know that they divided knowledge into sacred and profane—taught that Revelation was sacred—that Reason was blasphemous—that faith was holy and facts false. That the sin of Adam and Eve brought disease and pain, vice and death into the world. We know that they have taught the dogma of special providence—that all events are ordered and regulated by God—that he crowns and uncrowns kings—preserves and destroys—guards and kills—that it is the duty of man to submit to the divine will, and that no matter how much evil there may be—no matter how much suffering—how much pain and death, man should pour out his heart in thankfulness that it is no worse.

Let me be understood. I do not say and I do not think that the church was dishonest, that the clergy were insincere. I admit that all religions, all creeds, all priests, have been naturally produced. I admit, and cheerfully admit, that the believers in the supernatural have done some good—not because they believed in gods and devils—but in spite of it.

I know that thousands and thousands of clergymen are honest, self-denying and humane—that they are doing what they believe to be their duty—doing what

they can to induce men and women to live pure and noble lives. This is not the result of their creeds—it is because they are human.

What I say is that every honest teacher of the supernatural has been and is an unconscious enemy of the human race.

What is the philosophy of the church—of those who believe in the supernatural?

Back of all that is—back of all events—Christians put an infinite Juggler who with a wish creates, preserves, destroys. The world is his stage and mankind his puppets. He fills them with wants and desires, with appetites and ambitions—with hopes and fears—with love and hate. He touches the springs. He pulls the strings—baits the hooks, sets the traps and digs the pits.

The play is a continuous performance.

He watches these puppets as they struggle and fail. Sees them outwit each other and themselves—leads them to every crime, watches the births and deaths—hears lullabies at cradles and the fall of clods on coffins. He has no pity. He enjoys the tragedies—the desperation—the despair—the suicides. He smiles at the murders, the assassinations,—the seductions, the desertions—the abandoned babes of shame. He sees the weak enslaved—mothers

robbed of babes—the innocent in dungeons—on scaffolds. He sees crime crowned and hypocrisy robed.

He withholds the rain and his puppets starve. He opens the earth and they are devoured. He sends the flood and they are drowned. He empties the volcano and they perish in fire. He sends the cyclone and they are torn and mangled. With quick lightnings they are dashed to death. He fills the air and water with the invisible enemies of life—the messengers of pain, and watches the puppets as they breathe and drink. He creates cancers to feed upon their flesh—their quivering nerves—serpents, to fill their veins with venom,—beasts to crunch their bones—to lap their blood.

Some of the poor puppets he makes insane—makes them struggle in the darkness with imagined monsters with glaring eyes and dripping jaws, and some are made without the flame of thought, to drool and drivel through the darkened days. He sees all the agony, the injustice, the rags of poverty, the withered hands of want—the motherless babes—the deformed—the maimed—the leprous, knows the tears that flow—hears the sobs and moans—sees the gleam of swords, hears the roar of the guns—sees the fields reddened with blood—the white faces of

the dead. But he mocks when their fear cometh, and at their calamity he fills the heavens with laughter. And the poor puppets who are left alive, fall on their knees and thank the Juggler with all their hearts.

But after all, the gods have not supported the children of men, men have supported the gods. They have built the temples. They have sacrificed their babes, their lambs, their cattle. They have drenched the altars with blood. They have given their silver, their gold, their gems. They have fed and clothed their priests—but the gods have given nothing in return. Hidden in the shadows they have answered no prayer—heard no cry—given no sign—extended no hand—uttered no word. Unseen and unheard they have sat on their thrones, deaf and dumb—paralyzed and blind. In vain the steeples rise—in vain the prayers ascend.

And think what man has done to please the gods. He has renounced his reason—extinguished the torch of his brain, he has believed without evidence and against evidence. He has slandered and maligned himself. He has fasted and starved. He has mutilated his body—scarred his flesh—given his blood to vermin. He has persecuted, imprisoned and destroyed his fellows. He has deserted wife and child. He has lived alone in the desert. He has swung

censers and burned incense, counted beads and sprinkled himself with holy water—shut his eyes, clasped his hands—fallen upon his knees and groveled in the dust—but the gods have been silent—silent as stones.

Have these cringings and crawlings—these cruelties and absurdities—this faith and foolishness pleased the gods?

We do not know.

Has any disaster been averted—any blessing obtained? We do not know.

Shall we thank these gods?

Shall we thank the church's God?

Who and what is he?

They say that he is the creator and preserver of all that has been—of all that is—of all that will be—that he is the father of angels and devils, the architect of heaven and hell—that he made the earth—a man and woman—that he made the serpent who tempted them, made his own rival—gave victory to his enemy—that he repented of what he had done—that he sent a flood and destroyed all of the children of men with the exception of eight persons—that he tried to civilize the survivors and their children—tried to do this with earthquakes and fiery serpents—with pestilence and famine. But he failed. He

intended to fail. Then he was born into the world, preached for three years, and allowed some savages to kill him. Then he rose from the dead and went back to heaven.

He knew that he would fail, knew that he would be killed. In fact he arranged everything himself and brought everything to pass just as he had predestined it an eternity before the world was. All who believe these things will be saved and they who doubt or deny will be lost.

Has this God good sense?

Not always. He creates his own enemies and plots against himself. Nothing lives, except in accordance with his will, and yet the devils do not die.

What is the matter with this God? Well, sometimes he is foolish — sometimes he is cruel and sometimes he is insane.

Does this God exist? Is there any intelligence back of Nature? Is there any being anywhere among the stars who pities the suffering children of men?

We do not know.

Shall we thank Nature?

Does Nature care for us more than for leaves, or grass, or flies?

Does Nature know that we exist? We do not know.

But we do know that Nature is going to murder us all.

Why should we thank Nature? If we thank God or Nature for the sunshine and rain, for health and happiness, whom shall we curse for famine and pestilence, for earthquake and cyclone—for disease and death?

## III.

IF we cannot thank the orthodox churches—if we cannot thank the unknown, the incomprehensible, the supernatural—if we can not kneel to a Guess, or prostrate ourselves before a Perhaps—whom shall we thank?

Let us see what the worldly have done—what has been accomplished by those not "called," not "set apart," not "inspired," not filled with the Holy Ghost—by those who were neglected by all the Gods.

Passing over the Hindus, the Egyptians, the Greeks and Romans, their poets, philosophers and metaphysicians—we will come to modern times.

In the 10th century after Christ the Saracens—governors of a vast empire—"established colleges in Mongolia, Tartary, Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt, North Africa, Morocco, Fez and in Spain." The region owned by the Saracens was greater than the Roman Empire. "They had not only colleges—but observatories. The sciences were taught. They introduced the ten numerals—taught algebra

and trigonometry—understood cubic equations—knew the art of surveying—they made catalogues and maps of the stars—gave the great stars the names they still bear—they ascertained the size of the earth—determined the obliquity of the ecliptic and fixed the length of the year. They calculated eclipses, equinoxes, solstices, conjunctions of planets and occultations of stars. They constructed astronomical instruments. They made clocks of various kinds and were the inventors of the pendulum. They originated chemistry—discovered sulphuric and nitric acid and alcohol.

They were the first to publish pharmacopœias and dispensatories.

"In mechanics they determined the laws of falling bodies. They understood the mechanical powers, and the attraction of gravitation.

"They taught hydrostatics and determined the specific gravities of bodies.

"In optics they discovered that a ray of light did not proceed from the eye to an object—but from the object to the eye."

They were manufacturers of cotton, leather, paper and steel. "They gave us the game of chess." They produced romances and novels and essays on many subjects.

"In their schools they taught the modern doctrines of evolution and development." They anticipated Darwin and Spencer.

These people were not Christians. They were the followers, for the most part, of an impostor—of a pretended prophet of a false God. And yet while the true Christians, the men selected by the true God and filled with the Holy Ghost were tearing out the tongues of heretics, these wretches were irreverently tracing the orbits of the stars. While the true believers were flaying philosophers and extinguishing the eyes of thinkers, these godless followers of Mohammed were founding colleges, collecting manuscripts, investigating the facts of nature and giving their attention to science. Afterward the followers of Mohammed became the enemies of science and hated facts as intensely and honestly as Christians. Whoever has a revelation from God will defend it with all his strength—will abhor reason and deny facts.

But it is well to know that we are indebted to the Moors—to the followers of Mohammed—for having laid the foundations of modern science. It is well to know that we are not indebted to the church, to Christianity, for any useful fact.

It is well to know that the seeds of thought were

sown in our minds by the Greeks and Romans, and that our literature came from those seeds. The great literature of our language is Pagan in its thought—Pagan in its beauty—Pagan in its perfection. It is well to know that when Mohammedans were the friends of science, Christians were its enemies. How consoling it is to think that the friends of science—the men who educated their fellows—are now in hell, and that the men who persecuted and killed philosophers are now in heaven! Such is the justice of God.

The Christians of the Middle Ages, the men who were filled with the Holy Ghost, knew all about the worlds beyond the grave, but nothing about the world in which they lived. They thought the earth was flat—a little dishing if anything—that it was about five thousand years old, and that the stars were little sparkles made to beautify the night.

The fact is that Christianity was in existence for fifteen hundred years before there was an astronomer in Christendom. No follower of Christ knew the shape of the earth.

The earth was demonstrated to be a globe, not by a pope or cardinal—not by a collection of clergymen—not by the "called" or the "set apart," but by a sailor. Magellan left Seville, Spain, August 10th,

1519, sailed west and kept sailing west, and the ship reached Seville, the port it left, on Sept. 7th, 1522.

The world had been circumnavigated. The earth was known to be round. There had been a dispute between the Scriptures and a sailor. The fact took the sailor's side.

In 1543 Copernicus published his book, "On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies."

He had some idea of the vastness of the stars—of the astronomical spaces—of the insignificance of this world.

Toward the close of the sixteenth century, Bruno, one of the greatest men this world has produced, gave his thoughts to his fellow-men. He taught the plurality of worlds. He was a Pantheist, an Atheist, an honest man. He called the Catholic Church the "Triumphant Beast." He was imprisoned for many years, tried, convicted, and on the 16th day of February, 1600, burned in Rome by men filled with the Holy Ghost, burned on the spot where now his monument rises. Bruno, the noblest, the greatest of all the martyrs. The only one who suffered death for what he believed to be the truth. The only martyr who had no heaven to gain, no hell to shun, no God to please. He was nobler than inspired

men, grander than prophets, greater and purer than apostles. Above all the theologians of the world, above the makers of creeds, above the founders of religions rose this serene, unselfish and intrepid man.

Yet Christians, followers of Christ, murdered this incomparable man. These Christians were true to their creed. They believed that faith would be rewarded with eternal joy, and doubt punished with eternal pain. They were logical. They were pious and pitiless—devout and devilish—meek and malicious—religious and revengeful—Christ-like and cruel—loving with their mouths and hating with their hearts. And yet, honest victims of ignorance and fear.

What have the wordly done?

In 1608, Lippersheim, a Hollander, so arranged lenses that objects were exaggerated.

He invented the telescope.

He gave countless worlds to our eyes, and made us citizens of the Universe.

In 1610, on the night of January 7th, Galileo demonstrated the truth of the Copernican system, and in 1632, published his work on "The System of the World."

What did the church do?

Galileo was arrested, imprisoned, forced to fall upon his knees, put his hand on the Bible, and recant. For ten years he was kept in prison—for ten years until released by the pity of death. Then the church—men filled with the Holy Ghost—denied his body burial in consecrated ground. It was feared that his dust might corrupt the bodies of those who had persecuted him.

In 1609, Kepler published his book "Motions of the Planet Mars." He, too, knew of the attraction of gravitation and that it acted in proportion to mass and distance. Kepler announced his Three Laws. He found and mathematically expressed the relation of distance, mass, and motion. Nothing greater has been accomplished by the human mind.

Astronomy became a science and Christianity a superstition.

Then came Newton, Herschel and Laplace. The astronomy of Joshua and Elijah faded from the minds of intelligent men, and Jehovah became an ignorant tribal god.

Men began to see that the operations of Nature were not subject to interference. That eclipses were not caused by the wrath of God—that comets had nothing to do with the destruction of empires or the death of kings, that the stars wheeled in their orbits

without regard to the actions of men. In the sacred East the dawn appeared.

What have the wordly done?

A few years ago a few men became wicked enough to use their senses. They began to look and listen. They began to really see and then they began to reason. They forgot heaven and hell long enough to take some interest in this world. They began to examine soils and rocks. They noticed what had been done by rivers and seas. They found out something about the crust of the earth. They found that most of the rocks had been deposited and stratified in the water—rocks 70,000 feet in thickness. They found that the coal was once vegetable matter. They made the best calculations they could of the time required to make the coal, and concluded that it must have taken at least six or seven millions of years. They examined the chalk cliffs, found that they were composed of the microscopic shells of minute organisms, that is to say, the dust of these shells. This dust settled over areas as large as Europe and in some places the chalk is a mile in depth. This must have required many millions of years.

Lyell, the highest authority on the subject, says that it must have required, to cause the changes that

we know, at least two hundred million years. Think of these vast deposits caused by the slow falling of infinitesimal atoms of impalpable dust through the silent depths of ancient seas! Think of the microscopical forms of life, constructing their minute houses of lime, giving life to others, leaving their mansions beneath the waves, and so through countless generations building the foundations of continents and islands.

Go back of all life that we now know—back of all the flying lizards, the armored monsters, the hissing serpents, the winged and fanged horrors—back to the Laurentian rocks—to the eozóon, the first of living things that we have found—back of all mountains, seas and rivers—back to the first incrustation of the molten world—back of wave of fire and robe of flame—back to the time when all the substance of the earth blazed in the glowing sun with all the stars that wheel about the central fire.

Think of the days and nights that lie between!—think of the centuries, the withered leaves of time, that strew the desert of the past!

Nature does not hurry. Time cannot be wasted—cannot be lost. The future remains eternal and all the past is as though it had not been—as though it were to be. The infinite knows neither loss nor gain.

We know something of the history of the world—something of the human race; and we know that man has lived and struggled through want and war, through pestilence and famine, through ignorance and crime, through fear and hope, on the old earth for millions and millions of years.

At last we know that infallible popes, and countless priests and clergymen, who had been "called," filled with the Holy Ghost, and presidents of colleges, kings, emperors and executives of nations had mistaken the blundering guesses of ignorant savages for the wisdom of an infinite God.

At last we know that the story of creation, of the beginning of things, as told in the "sacred book," is not only untrue, but utterly absurd and idiotic. Now we know that the inspired writers did not know and that the God who inspired them did not know.

We are no longer misled by myths and legends. We rely upon facts. The world is our witness and the stars testify for us.

What have the worldly done?

They have investigated the religions of the world—have read the sacred books, the prophecies, the commandments, the rules of conduct. They have studied the symbols, the ceremonies, the prayers and sacrifices. And they have shown that all religions

are substantially the same—produced by the same causes—that all rest on a misconception of the facts in nature—that all are founded on ignorance and fear, on mistake and mystery.

They have found that Christianity is like the rest—that it was not a revelation, but a natural growth—that its gods and devils, its heavens and hells, were borrowed—that its ceremonies and sacraments were souvenirs of other religions—that no part of it came from heaven, but that it was all made by savage man. They found that Jehovah was a tribal god and that his ancestors had lived on the banks of the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Ganges and the Nile, and these ancestors were traced back to still more savage forms.

They found that all the sacred books were filled with inspired mistake and sacred absurdity.

But, say the Christians, we have the only inspired book. We have the Old Testament and the New. Where did you get the Old Testament? From the Jews?—Yes.

Let me tell you about it.

After the Jews returned from Babylon, about 400 years before Christ, Ezra commenced making the Bible. You will find an account of this in the Bible.

We know that Genesis was written after the Cap-

tivity—because it was from the Babylonians that the Jews got the story of the creation—of Adam and Eve, of the Garden—of the serpent, and the tree of life—of the flood—and from them they learned about the Sabbath.

You find nothing about that holy day in Judges, Joshua, Samuel, Kings or Chronicles—nothing in Job, the Psalms, in Esther, Solomon's Song or Ecclesiastes. Only in books written by Ezra after the return from Babylon.

When Ezra finished the inspired book, he placed it in the temple. It was written on the skins of beasts, and, so far as we know, there was but one.

What became of this Bible?

Jerusalem was taken by Titus about 70 years after Christ. The temple was destroyed and, at the request of Josephus, the Holy Bible was sent to Vespasian the Emperor, at Rome.

And this Holy Bible has never been seen or heard of since. So much for that.

Then there was a copy, or rather a translation, called the Septuagint.

How was that made?

It is said that Ptolemy Soter and his son Ptolemy Philadelphus obtained a translation of the Jewish Bible. This translation was made by seventy persons.

At that time the Jewish Bible did not contain Daniel, Ecclesiastes, but few of the Psalms and only a part of Isaiah.

What became of this translation known as the Septuagint?

It was burned in the Bruchium Library forty-seven years before Christ.

Then there was another so-called copy of part of the Bible, known as the Samaritan Roll of the Pentateuch.

But this is not considered of any value.

Have we a true copy of the Bible that was in the temple at Jerusalem—the one sent to Vespasian?

Nobody knows.

Have we a true copy of the Septuagint?

Nobody knows.

What is the oldest manuscript of the Bible we have in Hebrew?

The oldest manuscript we have in Hebrew was written in the 10th century after Christ. The oldest pretended copy we have of the Septuagint written in Greek was made in the 5th century after Christ.

If the Bible was divinely inspired, if it was the actual word of God, we have no authenticated copy. The original has been lost and we are left in the darkness of Nature.

It is impossible for us to show that our Bible is correct. We have no standard. Many of the books in our Bible contradict each other. Many chapters appear to be incomplete and parts of different books are written in the same words, showing that both could not have been original. The 19th and 20th chapters of 2nd Kings and the 37th and 38th chapters of Isaiah are exactly the same. So is the 36th chapter of Isaiah from the 2nd verse the same as the 18th chapter of 2nd Kings from the 2nd verse.

So, it is perfectly apparent that there could have been no possible propriety in inspiring the writers of Kings and the writers of Chronicles. The books are substantially the same, differing in a few mistakes—in a few falsehoods. The same is true of Leviticus and Numbers. The books do not agree either in facts or philosophy. They differ as the men differed who wrote them.

What have the worldly done?

They have investigated the phenomena of nature. They have invented ways to use the forces of the world, the weight of falling water—of moving air. They have changed water to steam, invented engines—the tireless giants that work for man. They have made lightning a messenger and slave. They

invented movable type, taught us the art of printing and made it possible to save and transmit the intellectual wealth of the world. They connected continents with cables, cities and towns with the telegraph—brought the world into one family—made intelligence independent of distance. They taught us how to build homes, to obtain food, to weave cloth. They covered the seas with iron ships and the land with roads and steeds of steel. They gave us the tools of all the trades—the implements of labor. They chiseled statues, painted pictures and "witched the world" with form and color. They have found the cause of and the cure for many maladies that afflict the flesh and minds of men. They have given us the instruments of music and the great composers and performers have changed the common air to tones and harmonies that intoxicate, exalt and purify the soul.

They have rescued us from the prisons of fear, and snatched our souls from the fangs and claws of superstition's loathsome, crawling, flying beasts. They have given us the liberty to think and the courage to express our thoughts. They have changed the frightened, the enslaved, the kneeling, the prostrate into men and women—clothed them in their right minds and made them truly free. They

have uncrowned the phantoms, wrested the scepters from the ghosts and given this world to the children of men. They have driven from the heart the fiends of fear and extinguished the flames of hell.

They have read a few leaves of the great volume —deciphered some of the records written on stone by the tireless hands of time in the dim past. They have told us something of what has been done by wind and wave, by fire and frost, by life and death, the ceaseless workers, the pauseless forces of the world.

They have enlarged the horizon of the known, changed the glittering specks that shine above us to wheeling worlds, and filled all space with countless suns.

They have found the qualities of substances, the nature of things—how to analyze, separate and combine, and have enabled us to use the good and avoid the hurtful.

They have given us mathematics in the higher forms, by means of which we measure the astronomical spaces, the distances to stars, the velocity at which the heavenly bodies move, their density and weight, and by which the mariner navigates the waste and trackless seas. They have given us all we have of knowledge, of literature and art. They

have made life worth living. They have filled the world with conveniences, comforts and luxuries.

All this has been done by the worldly—by those who were not "called" or "set apart" or filled with the Holy Ghost or had the slightest claim to "apostolic succession." The men who accomplished these things were not "inspired." They had no revelation—no supernatural aid. They were not clad in sacred vestments, and tiaras were not upon their brows. They were not even ordained. They used their senses, observed and recorded facts. They had confidence in reason. They were patient searchers for the truth. They turned their attention to the affairs of this world. They were not saints. They were sensible men. They worked for themselves, for wife and child and for the benefit of all.

To these men we are indebted for all we are, for all we know, for all we have. They were the creators of civilization—the founders of free states—the saviors of liberty—the destroyers of superstition and the great captains in the army of progress.

## IV.

WHOM shall we thank? Standing here at the close of the 19th century—amid the trophies of thought—the triumphs of genius—here under the flag of the Great Republic—knowing something of the history of man—here on this day that has been set apart for thanksgiving, I most reverently thank the good men, the good women of the past, I thank the kind fathers, the loving mothers of the savage days. I thank the father who spoke the first gentle word, the mother who first smiled upon her babe. I thank the first true friend. I thank the savages who hunted and fished that they and their babes might live. I thank those who cultivated the ground and changed the forests into farms—those who built rude homes and watched the faces of their happy children in the glow of fireside flames—those who domesticated horses, cattle and sheep—those who invented wheels and looms and taught us to spin and weave—those who by cultivation changed wild grasses into wheat and corn, changed bitter things to fruit, and

worthless weeds to flowers, that sowed within our souls the seeds of art. I thank the poets of the dawn—the tellers of legends—the makers of myths —the singers of joy and grief, of hope and love. I thank the artists who chiseled forms in stone and wrought with light and shade the face of man. I thank the philosophers, the thinkers, who taught us how to use our minds in the great search for truth. I thank the astronomers who explored the heavens, told us the secrets of the stars, the glories of the constellations—the geologists who found the story of the world in fossil forms, in memoranda kept in ancient rocks, in lines written by waves, by frost and fire—the anatomists who sought in muscle, nerve and bone for all the mysteries of life—the chemists who unraveled Nature's work that they might learn her art—the physicians who have laid the hand of science on the brow of pain, the hand whose magic touch restores—the surgeons who have defeated Nature's self and forced her to preserve the lives of those she labored to destroy.

I thank the discoverers of chloroform and ether, the two angels who give to their beloved sleep, and wrap the throbbing brain in the soft robes of dreams. I thank the great inventors—those who gave us movable type and the press, by means of which great

thoughts and all discovered facts are made immortal —the inventors of engines, of the great ships, of the railways, the cables and telegraphs. I thank the great mechanics, the workers in iron and steel, in wood and stone. I thank the inventors and makers of the numberless things of use and luxury.

I thank the industrious men, the loving mothers, the useful women. They are the benefactors of our race.

The inventor of pins did a thousand times more good than all the popes and cardinals, the bishops and priests—than all the clergymen and parsons, exhorters and theologians that ever lived.

The inventor of matches did more for the comfort and convenience of mankind than all the founders of religions and the makers of all creeds—than all malicious monks and selfish saints.

I thank the honest men and women who have expressed their sincere thoughts, who have been true to themselves and have preserved the veracity of their souls.

I thank the thinkers of Greece and Rome, Zeno and Epicurus, Cicero and Lucretius. I thank Bruno, the bravest, and Spinoza, the subtlest of men.

I thank Voltaire, whose thought lighted a flame in the brain of man, unlocked the doors of super-

stition's cells and gave liberty to many millions of his fellow-men. Voltaire—a name that sheds light. Voltaire—a star that superstition's darkness cannot quench.

I thank the great poets—the dramatists. I thank Homer and Aeschylus, and I thank Shakespeare above them all. I thank Burns for the heart-throbs he changed into songs, for his lyrics of flame. I thank Shelley for his Skylark, Keats for his Grecian Urn and Byron for his Prisoner of Chillon. I thank the great novelists. I thank the great sculptors. I thank the unknown man who moulded and chiseled the Venus de Milo. I thank the great painters. I thank Rembrandt and Corot. I thank all who have adorned, enriched and ennobled life—all who have created the great, the noble, the heroic and artistic ideals.

I thank the statesmen who have preserved the rights of man. I thank Paine whose genius sowed the seeds of independence in the hearts of '76. I thank Jefferson whose mighty words for liberty have made the circuit of the globe. I thank the founders, the defenders, the saviors of the Republic. I thank Ericsson, the greatest mechanic of his century, for the monitor. I thank Lincoln for the Proclamation. I thank Grant for his victories and

the vast host that fought for the right,—for the freedom of man. I thank them all—the living and the dead.

I thank the great scientists—those who have reached the foundation, the bed-rock—who have built upon facts—the great scientists, in whose presence theologians look silly and feel malicious.

The scientists never persecuted, never imprisoned their fellow-men. They forged no chains, built no dungeons, erected no scaffolds—tore no flesh with red hot pincers—dislocated no joints on racks—crushed no bones in iron boots—extinguished no eyes—tore out no tongues and lighted no fagots. They did not pretend to be inspired—did not claim to be prophets or saints or to have been born again. They were only intelligent and honest men. They did not appeal to force or fear. They did not regard men as slaves to be ruled by torture, by lash and chain, nor as children to be cheated with illusions, rocked in the cradle of an idiot creed and soothed by a lullaby of lies.

They did not wound—they healed. They did not kill—they lengthened life. They did not enslave—they broke the chains and made men free. They sowed the seeds of knowledge, and many millions

have reaped, are reaping, and will reap the harvest of joy.

I thank Humboldt and Helmholtz and Haeckel and Büchner. I thank Lamarck and Darwin—Darwin who revolutionized the thought of the intellectual world. I thank Huxley and Spencer. I thank the scientists one and all.

I thank the heroes, the destroyers of prejudice and fear—the dethroners of savage gods—the extinguishers of hate's eternal fire—the heroes, the breakers of chains—the founders of free states—the makers of just laws—the heroes who fought and fell on countless fields—the heroes whose dungeons became shrines—the heroes whose blood made scaffolds sacred—the heroes, the apostles of reason, the disciples of truth, the soldiers of freedom—the heroes who held high the holy torch and filled the world with light.

With all my heart I thank them all.

# A LAY SERMON.

# A LAY SERMON.*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: In the greatest tragedy that has ever been written by man—in the fourth scene of the third act—is the best prayer that I have ever read; and when I say "the greatest tragedy," everybody familiar with Shakespeare will know that I refer to "King Lear." After he has been on the heath, touched with insanity, coming suddenly to the place of shelter, he says:

"I'll pray, and then I'll sleep."

And this prayer is my text:

"Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your unhoused heads, your unfed sides,
Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these? Oh, I have ta'en
Too little care of this. Take physic, pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou may'st shake the superflux to them,
And show the heavens more just."

That is one of the noblest prayers that ever fell from human lips. If nobody has too much, everybody will have enough!

*Delivered before the Congress of the American Secular Union, at Chickering Hall, New York, Nov. 14, 1886.

I propose to say a few words upon subjects that are near to us all, and in which every human being ought to be interested—and if he is not, it may be that his wife will be, it may be that his orphans will be; and I would like to see this world, at last, so that a man could die and not feel that he left his wife and children a prey to the greed, the avarice, or the cruelties of mankind. There is something wrong in a government where they who do the most have the least. There is something wrong, when honesty wears a rag, and rascality a robe; when the loving, the tender, eat a crust, while the infamous sit at banquets. I cannot do much, but I can at least sympathize with those who suffer. There is one thing that we should remember at the start, and if I can only teach you that, to-night—unless you know it already—I shall consider the few words I may have to say a wonderful success.

I want you to remember that everybody is as he *must* be. I want you to get out of your minds the old nonsense of "free moral agency;" and then you will have charity for the whole human race. When you know that they are not responsible for their dispositions, any more than for their height; not responsible for their acts, any more than for their dreams; when you finally understand the philosophy

that everything exists as the result of an efficient cause, and that the lightest fancy that ever fluttered its painted wings in the horizon of hope was as necessarily produced as the planet that in its orbit wheels about the sun—when you understand this, I believe you will have charity for all mankind—including even yourself.

Wealth is not a crime; poverty is not a virtue—although the virtuous have generally been poor. There is only one good, and that is human happiness; and he only is a wise man who makes himself and others happy.

I have heard all my life about self-denial. There never was anything more idiotic than that. No man who does right practices self-denial. To do right is the bud and blossom and fruit of wisdom. To do right should always be dictated by the highest possible selfishness and the most perfect generosity. No man practices self-denial unless he does wrong. To inflict an injury upon yourself is an act of self-denial. He who denies justice to another denies it to himself. To plant seeds that will forever bear the fruit of joy, is not an act of self-denial. So this idea of doing good to others only for their sake is absurd. You want to do it, not simply for their sake, but for your own; because a perfectly civilized man can

never be perfectly happy while there is one unhappy being in this universe.

Let us take another step. The barbaric world was to be rewarded in some other world for acting sensibly in this. They were promised rewards in another world, if they would only have self-denial enough to be virtuous in this. If they would forego the pleasures of larceny and murder; if they would forego the thrill and bliss of meanness here, they would be rewarded hereafter for that self-denial. I have exactly the opposite idea. Do right, not to deny yourself, but because you love yourself and because you love others. Be generous, because it is better for you. Be just, because any other course is the suicide of the soul. Whoever does wrong plagues himself, and when he reaps that harvest, he will find that he was not practicing self-denial when he did right.

If you want to be happy yourself, if you are truly civilized, you want others to be happy. Every man ought, to the extent of his ability, to increase the happiness of mankind, for the reason that that will increase his own. No one can be really prosperous unless those with whom he lives share the sunshine and the joy.

The first thing a man wants to know and be sure

of is when he has got enough. Most people imagine that the rich are in heaven, but, as a rule, it is only a gilded hell. There is not a man in the city of New York with genius enough, with brains enough, to own five millions of dollars. Why? The money will own him. He becomes the key to a safe. That money will get him up at daylight; that money will separate him from his friends; that money will fill his heart with fear; that money will rob his days of sunshine and his nights of pleasant dreams. He cannot own it. He becomes the property of that money. And he goes right on making more. What for? He does not know. It becomes a kind of insanity. No one is happier in a palace than in a cabin. I love to see a log house. It is associated in my mind always with pure, unalloyed happiness. It is the only house in the world that looks as though it had no mortgage on it. It looks as if you could spend there long, tranquil autumn days; the air filled with serenity; no trouble, no thoughts about notes, about interest—nothing of the kind; just breathing free air, watching the hollyhocks, listening to the birds and to the music of the spring that comes like a poem from the earth.

It is an insanity to get more than you want. Imagine a man in this city, an intelligent man, say with

two or three millions of coats, eight or ten millions of hats, vast warehouses full of shoes, billions of neckties, and imagine that man getting up at four o'clock in the morning, in the rain and snow and sleet, working like a dog all day to get another neck-tie! Is not that exactly what the man of twenty or thirty millions, or of five millions, does to-day? Wearing his life out that somebody may say, "How rich he is!" What can he do with the surplus? Nothing. Can he eat it? No. Make friends? No. Purchase flattery and lies? Yes. Make all his poor relations hate him? Yes. And then, what worry! Annoyed, nervous, tormented, until his poor little brain becomes inflamed, and you see in the morning paper, "Died of apoplexy." This man finally began to worry for fear he would not have enough neckties to last him through.

So we ought to teach our children that great wealth is a curse. Great wealth is the mother of crime. On the other hand are the abject poor. And let me ask, to-night: Is the world forever to remain as it was when Lear made his prayer? Is it ever to remain as it is now? I hope not. Are there always to be millions whose lips are white with famine? Is the withered palm to be always extended, imploring from the stony heart of respectable charity, alms? Must

every man who sits down to a decent dinner always think of the starving? Must every one sitting by the fireside think of some poor mother, with a child strained to her breast, shivering in the storm? I hope not. Are the rich always to be divided from the poor,—not only in fact, but in feeling? And that division is growing more and more every day The gulf between Lazarus and Dives widens year by year, only their positions are changed—Lazarus is in hell, and he thinks Dives is in the bosom of Abraham.

And there is one thing that helps to widen this gulf. In nearly every city of the United States you will find the fashionable part, and the poor part. The poor know nothing of the fashionable part, except the outside splendor; and as they go by the palaces, that poison plant called envy, springs and grows in their poor hearts. The rich know nothing of the poor, except the squalor and rags and wretchedness, and what they read in the police records, and they say, "Thank God, we are not like those people!" Their hearts are filled with scorn and contempt, and the hearts of the others with envy and hatred. There must be some way devised for the rich and poor to get acquainted. The poor do not know how many well-dressed people sympathize with them, and the rich do not know how many noble hearts beat be-

neath the rags. If we can ever get the loving poor acquainted with the sympathizing rich, this question will be nearly solved.

In a hundred other ways they are divided. If anything should bring mankind together it ought to be a common belief. In Catholic countries, that does have a softening influence upon the rich and upon the poor. They believe the same. So in Mohammedan countries they can kneel in the same mosque, and pray to the same God. But how is it with us? The church is not free. There is no welcome in the velvet for the velveteen. Poverty does not feel at home there, and the consequence is, the rich and poor are kept apart, even by their religion. I am not saying anything against religion. I am not on that question ; but I would think more of any religion, provided that even for one day in the week, or for one hour in the year, it allowed wealth to clasp the hand of poverty and to have, for one moment even, the thrill of genuine friendship.

In the olden times, in barbaric life, it was a simple thing to get a living. A little hunting, a little fishing, pulling a little fruit, and digging for roots—all simple ; and they were nearly all on an equality, and comparatively there were fewer failures. Living has at last become complex. All the avenues are filled

with men struggling for the accomplishment of the same thing :

> " For emulation hath a thousand sons
> That one by one pursue : if you give way,
> Or hedge aside from the direct forthright,
> Like to an entered tide, they all rush by,
> And leave you hindmost ;—
> Or, like a gallant horse, fallen in first rank,
> Lie there for pavement to the abject rear."

The struggle is so hard. And just exactly as we have risen in the scale of being, the per cent. of failures has increased. It is so that all men are not capable of getting a living. They have not cunning enough, intellect enough, muscle enough—they are not strong enough. They are too generous, or they are too negligent ; and then some people seem to have what is called " bad luck "—that is to say, when anything falls, they are under it ; when anything bad happens, it happens to them.

And now there is another trouble. Just as life becomes complex and as everyone is trying to accomplish certain objects, all the ingenuity of the brain is at work to get there by a shorter way, and, in consequence, this has become an age of invention. Myriads of machines have been invented—every one of them to save labor. If these machines helped the laborer, what a blessing they would be!

But the laborer does not own the machine; the machine owns him. That is the trouble. In the olden time, when I was a boy, even, you know how it was in the little towns. There was a shoemaker —two of them—a tailor or two, a blacksmith, a wheelwright. I remember just how the shops used to look. I used to go to the blacksmith shop at night, get up on the forge, and hear them talk about turning horse-shoes. Many a night have I seen the sparks fly and heard the stories that were told. There was a great deal of human nature in those days! Everybody was known. If times got hard, the poor little shoemakers made a living mending, half-soling, straightening up the heels. The same with the blacksmith; the same with the tailor. They could get credit—they did not have to pay till the next January, and if they could not pay then, they took another year, and they were happy enough. Now one man is not a shoemaker. There is a great building—several hundred thousand dollars' worth of machinery, three or four thousand people —not a single mechanic in the whole building. One sews on straps, another greases the machines, cuts out soles, waxes threads. And what is the result? When the machines stop, three thousand men are out of employment. Credit goes. Then come want

and famine, and if they happen to have a little child die, it would take them years to save enough of their earnings to pay the expense of putting away that little sacred piece of flesh. And yet, by this machinery we can produce enough to flood the world. By the inventions in agricultural machinery the United States can feed all the mouths upon the earth. There is not a thing that man uses that can not instantly be over-produced to such an extent as to become almost worthless; and yet, with all this production, with all this power to create, there are millions and millions in abject want. Granaries bursting, and famine looking into the doors of the poor! Millions of everything, and yet millions wanting everything and having substantially nothing!

Now, there is something wrong there. We have got into that contest between machines and men, and if extravagance does not keep pace with ingenuity, it is going to be the most terrible question that man has ever settled. I tell you, to-night, that these things are worth thinking about. Nothing that touches the future of our race, nothing that touches the happiness of ourselves or our children, should be beneath our notice. We should think of these things—must think of them—and we should

endeavor to see that justice is finally done between man and man.

My sympathies are with the poor. My sympathies are with the workingmen of the United States. Understand me distinctly. I am not an Anarchist. Anarchy is the reaction from tyranny. I am not a Socialist. I am not a Communist. I am an Individualist. I do not believe in tyranny of government, but I do believe in justice as between man and man.

What is the remedy? Or, what can we think of —for do not imagine that I think I know. It is an immense, an almost infinite, question, and all we can do is to guess. You have heard a great deal lately upon the land subject. Let me say a word or two upon that. In the first place I do not want to take, and I would not take, an inch of land from any human being that belonged to him. If we ever take it, we must pay for it—condemn it and take it —do not rob anybody. Whenever any man advocates justice, and robbery as the means, I suspect him.

No man should be allowed to own any land that he does not use. Everybody knows that—I do not care whether he has thousands or millions. I have owned a great deal of land, but I know just as well

as I know I am living that I should not be allowed to have it unless I use it. And why? Don't you know that if people could bottle the air, they would? Don't you know that there would be an American Air-bottling Association? And don't you know that they would allow thousands and millions to die for want of breath, if they could not pay for air? I am not blaming anybody. I am just telling how it is. Now, the land belongs to the children of Nature. Nature invites into this world every babe that is born. And what would you think of me, for instance, to-night, if I had invited you here—nobody had charged you anything, but you had been invited—and when you got here you had found one man pretending to occupy a hundred seats, another fifty, and another seventy-five, and thereupon you were compelled to stand up—what would you think of the invitation? It seems to me that every child of Nature is entitled to his share of the land, and that he should not be compelled to beg the privilege to work the soil, of a babe that happened to be born before him. And why do I say this? Because it is not to our interest to have a few landlords and millions of tenants.

The tenement house is the enemy of modesty, the enemy of virtue, the enemy of patriotism.

Home is where the virtues grow. I would like to see the law so that every home, to a small amount, should be free not only from sale for debts, but should be absolutely free from taxation, so that every man could have a home. Then we will have a nation of patriots.

Now, suppose that every man were to have all the land he is able to buy. The Vanderbilts could buy to-day all the land that is in farms in the State of Ohio—every foot of it. Would it be for the best interest of that State to have a few landlords and four or five millions of serfs? So, I am in favor of a law finally to be carried out—not by robbery, but by compensation, under the right, as the lawyers call it, of eminent domain—so that no person would be allowed to own more land than he uses. I am not blaming these rich men for being rich. I pity the most of them. I had rather be poor, with a little sympathy in my heart, than to be rich as all the mines of earth and not have that little flower of pity in my breast. I do not see how a man can have hundreds of millions and pass every day people that have not enough to eat. I do not understand it. I might be just the same way myself. There is something in money that dries up the sources of affection, and the probability is, it is this: the moment a man

gets money, so many men are trying to get it away from him that in a little while he regards the whole human race as his enemy, and he generally thinks that they could be rich, too, if they would only attend to business as he has. Understand, I am not blaming these people. There is a good deal of human nature in us all. You remember the story of the man who made a speech at a Socialist meeting, and closed it by saying, "Thank God, I am no monopolist," but as he sank to his seat said, "But I wish to the Lord I was!" We must remember that these rich men are naturally produced. Do not blame them. Blame the system!

Certain privileges have been granted to the few by the Government, ostensibly for the benefit of the many; and whenever that grant is not for the good of the many, it should be taken from the few—not by force, not by robbery, but by estimating fairly the value of that property, and paying to them its value; because everything should be done according to law and order.

What remedy, then, is there? First, the great weapon in this country is the ballot. Each voter is a sovereign. There the poorest is the equal of the richest. His vote will count just as many as though the hand that cast it controlled millions. The poor

are in the majority in this country. If there is any law that oppresses them, it is their fault. They have followed the fife and drum of some party. They have been misled by others. No man should go an inch with a party—no matter if that party is half the world and has in it the greatest intellects of the earth —unless that party is going his way. No honest man should ever turn round to join anything. If it overtakes him, good. If he has to hurry up a little to get to it, good. But do not go with anything that is not going your way; no matter whether they call it Republican, or Democrat, or Progressive Democracy—do not go with it unless it goes your way.

The ballot is the power. The law should settle many of these questions between capital and labor. But I expect the greatest good to come from civilization, from the growth of a sense of justice; for I tell you to-night, a civilized man will never want anything for less than it is worth—a civilized man, when he sells a thing, will never want more than it is worth—a really and truly civilized man, would rather be cheated than to cheat. And yet, in the United States, good as we are, nearly everybody wants to get everything for a little less than it is worth, and the man that sells it to him wants to get a little more than it is worth, and this breeds rascality

on both sides. That ought to be done away with. There is one step toward it that we will take: we will finally say that human flesh, human labor, shall not depend entirely on "supply and demand." That is infinitely cruel. Every man should give to another according to his ability to give—and enough that he may make his living and lay something by for the winter of old age.

Go to England. Civilized country they call it. It is not. It never was. I am afraid it never will be. Go to London, the greatest city of this world, where there is the most wealth—the greatest glittering piles of gold. And yet, one out of every six in that city dies in a hospital, a workhouse or a prison. Is that the best that we are ever to know? Is that the last word that civilization has to say? Look at the women in this town sewing for a living, making cloaks for less than forty-five cents, that sell for $45! Right here—here, amid all the palaces, amid the thousands of millions of property—here! Is that all that civilization can do? Must a poor woman support herself, or her child, or her children, by that kind of labor, and with such pay—and do we call ourselves civilized?

Did you ever read that wonderful poem about the sewing woman? Let me tell you the last verse:

"Winds that have sainted her, tell ye the story
Of the young life by the needle that bled,
Making a bridge over death's soundless waters
Out of a swaying, and soul-cutting thread—
Over it going, all the world knowing
That thousands have trod it, foot-bleeding, before:
God protect all of us! God pity all of us,
Should she look back from the opposite shore!"

I cannot call this civilization. There must be something nearer a fairer division in this world.

You can never get it by strikes. Never. The first strike that is a great success will be the last, because the people who believe in law and order will put the strikers down. The strike is no remedy. Boycotting is no remedy. Brute force is no remedy. These questions have to be settled by reason, by candor, by intelligence, by kindness; and nothing is permanently settled in this world that has not for its corner-stone justice, and is not protected by the profound conviction of the human mind.

This is no country for Anarchy, no country for Communism, no country for the Socialist. Why? Because the political power is equally divided. What other reason? Speech is free. What other? The press is untrammeled. And that is all that the right should ever ask—a free press, free speech, and the protection of person. That is enough. That is all I

ask. In a country like Russia, where every mouth is a bastile and every tongue a convict, there may be some excuse. Where the noblest and the best are driven to Siberia, there may be a reason for the Nihilist. In a country where no man is allowed to petition for redress, there is a reason, but not here. This—say what you will against it—this is the best Government ever founded by the human race! Say what you will of parties, say what you will of dishonesty, the holiest flag that ever kissed the air is ours!

Only a few years ago morally we were a low people—before we abolished slavery—but now, when there is no chain except that of custom, when every man has an opportunity, this is the grandest Government of the earth. There is hardly a man in the United States to-day, of any importance, whose voice anybody cares to hear, who was not nursed at the loving breast of poverty. Look at the children of the rich. My God, what a punishment for being rich! So, whatever happens, let every man say that this Government, and this form of government, shall stand.

"But," say some, "these workingmen are dangerous." I deny it. We are all in their power. They run all the cars. Our lives are in their hands almost

every day. They are working in all our homes. They do the labor of this world. We are all at their mercy, and yet they do not commit more crimes, according to number, than the rich. Remember that. I am not afraid of them. Neither am I afraid of the monopolists, because, under our institutions, when they become hurtful to the general good, the people will stand it just to a certain point, and then comes the end—not in anger, not in hate, but from a love of liberty and justice.

Now, we have in this country another class. We call them "criminals." Let me take another step:

> "'Tis not enough to help the feeble up,
> But to support him after."

Recollect what I said in the first place—that every man is as he must be. Every crime is a necessary product. The seeds were all sown, the land thoroughly plowed, the crop well attended to, and carefully harvested. Every crime is born of necessity. If you want less crime, you must change the conditions. Poverty makes crime. Want, rags, crusts, failure, misfortune—all these awake the wild beast in man, and finally he takes, and takes contrary to law, and becomes a criminal. And what do you do with him? You punish him. Why not punish a man for having the consumption? The time will come

when you will see that that is just as logical. What do you do with the criminal? You send him to the penitentiary. Is he made better? Worse. The first thing you do is to try to trample out his manhood, by putting an indignity upon him. You mark him. You put him in stripes. At night you put him in darkness. His feeling for revenge grows. You make a wild beast of him, and he comes out of that place branded in body and soul, and then you won't let him reform if he wants to. You put on airs above him, because he has been in the penitentiary. The next time you look with scorn upon a convict, let me beg of you to do one thing. Maybe you are not as bad as I am, but do one thing: think of all the crimes you have wanted to commit; think of all the crimes you would have committed if you had had the opportunity; think of all the temptations to which you would have yielded had nobody been looking; and then put your hand on your heart and say whether you can justly look with contempt even upon a convict.

None but the noblest should inflict punishment, even on the basest.

Society has no right to punish any man in revenge —no right to punish any man except for two objects—one, the prevention of crime; the other, the

reformation of the criminal. How can you reform him? Kindness is the sunshine in which virtue grows. Let it be understood by these men that there is no revenge; let it be understood, too, that they can reform. Only a little while ago I read of a case of a young man who had been in a penitentiary and came out. He kept it a secret, and went to work for a farmer. He got in love with the daughter, and wanted to marry her. He had nobility enough to tell the truth—he told the father that he had been in the penitentiary. The father said, "You cannot have my daughter, because it would stain her life." The young man said, "Yes, it would stain her life, therefore I will not marry her." He went out. In a few moments afterward they heard the report of a pistol, and he was dead. He left just a little note saying: "I am through. There is no need of my living longer, when I stain with my life the one I love." And yet we call our society civilized. There is a mistake.

I want that question thought of. I want all my fellow-citizens to think of it. I want you to do what you can to do away with all cruelty. There are, of course, some cases that have to be treated with what might be called almost cruelty; but if there is the smallest seed of good in any human heart, let kind-

ness fall upon it until it grows, and in that way I know, and so do you, that the world will get better and better day by day.

Let us, above all things, get acquainted with each other. Let every man teach his son, teach his daughter, that labor is honorable. Let us say to our children : It is your business to see that you never become a burden on others. Your first duty is to take care of yourselves, and if there is a surplus, with that surplus help your fellow-man. You owe it to yourself above all things not to be a burden upon others. Teach your son that it is his duty not only, but his highest joy, to become a home-builder, a home-owner. Teach your children that the fireside is the happiest place in this world. Teach them that whoever is an idler, whoever lives upon the labor of others, whether he is a pirate or a king, is a dishonorable person. Teach them that no civilized man wants anything for nothing, or for less than it is worth ; that he wants to go through this world paying his way as he goes, and if he gets a little ahead, an extra joy, it should be divided with another, if that other is doing something for himself. Help others help themselves.

And let us teach that great wealth is not great happiness ; that money will not purchase love ; it

never did and never can purchase respect; it never did and never can purchase the highest happiness. I believe with Robert Burns:

> "If happiness have not her seat
> And center in the breast,
> We may be wise, or rich, or great,
> But never can be blest."

We must teach this, and let our fellow-citizens know that we give them every right that we claim for ourselves. We must discuss these questions and have charity—and we will have it whenever we have the philosophy that all men are as they must be, and that intelligence and kindness are the only levers capable of raising mankind.

Then there is another thing. Let each one be true to himself. No matter what his class, no matter what his circumstances, let him tell his thought. Don't let his class bribe him. Don't let him talk like a banker because he is a banker. Don't let him talk like the rest of the merchants because he is a merchant. Let him be true to the human race instead of to his little business—be true to the ideal in his heart and brain, instead of to his little present and apparent selfishness—let him have a larger and more intelligent selfishness—a generous philosophy, that includes not only others but himself.

So far as I am concerned, I have made up my mind that no organization, secular or religious, shall be my master. I have made up my mind that no necessity of bread, or roof, or raiment shall ever put a padlock on my lips. I have made up my mind that no hope of preferment, no honor, no wealth, shall ever make me for one moment swerve from what I really believe, no matter whether it is to my immediate interest, as one would think, or not. And while I live, I am going to do what little I can to help my fellow-men who have not been as fortunate as I have been. I shall talk on their side, I shall vote on their side, and do what little I can to convince men that happiness does not lie in the direction of great wealth, but in the direction of achievement for the good of themselves and for the good of their fellow-men. I shall do what little I can to hasten the day when this earth shall be covered with homes, and when by countless firesides shall sit the happy and the loving families of the world.

# THE FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH.

# THE FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH.

## I.

## THE OLD TESTAMENT.

ONE of the foundation stones of our faith is the Old Testament. If that book is not true, if its authors were unaided men, if it contains blunders and falsehoods, then that stone crumbles to dust.

The geologists demonstrated that the author of Genesis was mistaken as to the age of the world, and that the story of the universe having been created in six days, about six thousand years ago could not be true.

The theologians then took the ground that the "days" spoken of in Genesis were periods of time, epochs, six "long whiles," and that the work of creation might have been commenced millions of years ago.

The change of days into epochs was considered by the believers of the Bible as a great triumph over the hosts of infidelity. The fact that Jehovah had ordered the Jews to keep the Sabbath, giving as a reason that he had made the world in six days and rested on the seventh, did not interfere with the acceptance of the "epoch" theory.

But there is still another question. How long has man been upon the earth?

According to the Bible, Adam was certainly the first man, and in his case the epoch theory cannot change the account. The Bible gives the age at which Adam died, and gives the generations to the flood—then to Abraham and so on, and shows that from the creation of Adam to the birth of Christ it was about four thousand and four years.

According to the sacred Scriptures man has been on this earth five thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine years *and* no more.

Is this true?

Geologists have divided a few years of the world's history into periods, reaching from the azoic rocks to the soil of our time. With most of these periods they associate certain forms of life, so that it is known that the lowest forms of life belonged with the earliest

periods, and the higher with the more recent. It is also known that certain forms of life existed in Europe many ages ago, and that many thousands of years ago these forms disappeared.

For instance, it is well established that at one time there lived in Europe, and in the British Islands some of the most gigantic mammals, the mammoth, the woolly-haired rhinoceros, the Irish elk, elephants and other forms that have in those countries become extinct. Geologists say that many thousands of years have passed since these animals ceased to inhabit those countries.

It was during the Drift Period that these forms of life existed in Europe and England, and that must have been hundreds of thousands of years ago.

In caves, once inhabited by men, have been found implements of flint and the bones of these extinct animals. With the flint tools man had split the bones of these beasts that he might secure the marrow for food.

Many such caves and hundreds of such tools, and of such bones have been found. And we now know that in the Drift Period man was the companion of these extinct monsters.

It is therefore certain that many, many thousands of years before Adam lived, men, women and children inhabited the earth.

It is certain that the account in the Bible of the creation of the first man is a mistake. It is certain that the inspired writers knew nothing about the origin of man.

Let me give you another fact :

The Egyptians were astronomers. A few years ago representations of the stars were found on the walls of an old temple, and it was discovered by calculating backward that the stars did occupy the exact positions as represented about seven hundred and fifty years before Christ. Afterward another representation of the stars was found, and by calculating in the same way, it was found that the stars did occupy the exact positions represented about three thousand eight hundred years before Christ.

According to the Bible the first man was created four thousand and four years before Christ. If this is true then Egypt was founded, its language formed, its arts cultivated, its astronomical discoveries made and recorded about two hundred years after the creation of the first man.

In other words, Adam was two or three hundred years old when the Egyptian astronomers made these representations.

Nothing can be more absurd.

Again I say that the writers of the Bible were mistaken.

How do I know?

According to that same Bible there was a flood some fifteen or sixteen hundred years after Adam was created that destroyed the entire human race with the exception of eight persons, and according to the Bible the Egyptians descended from one of the sons of Noah. How then did the Egyptians represent the stars in the position they occupied twelve hundred years before the flood?

No one pretends that Egypt existed as a nation before the flood. Yet the astronomical representations found, must have been made more than a thousand years before the world was drowned.

There is another mistake in the Bible.

According to that book the sun was made after the earth was created.

Is this true?

Did the earth exist before the sun?

The men of science are believers in the exact opposite. They believe that the earth is a child of the sun — that the earth, as well as the other planets belonging to our constellation, came from the sun.

The writers of the Bible were mistaken.

There is another point:

According to the Bible, Jehovah made the world in six days, and the work done each day is described. What did Jehovah do on the second day?

This is the record:

"And God said: Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so, and God called the firmament heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day."

The writer of this believed in a solid firmament—the floor of Jehovah's house. He believed that the waters had been divided, and that the rain came from above the firmament. He did not understand the fact of evaporation—did not know that the rain came from the water on the earth.

Now we know that there is no firmament, and

we know that the waters are not divided by a firmament. Consequently we know that, according to the Bible, Jehovah did nothing on the second day. He must have rested on Tuesday. This being so, we ought to have two Sundays a week.

Can we rely on the historical parts of the Bible?

Seventy souls went down into Egypt, and in two hundred and fifteen years increased to three millions. They could not have doubled more than four times a century. Say nine times in two hundred and fifteen years.

This makes thirty-five thousand eight hundred and forty, (35,840,) instead of three millions.

Can we believe the accounts of the battles?

Take one instance:

Jereboam had an army of eight hundred thousand men, Abijah of four hundred thousand. They fought. The Lord was on Abijah's side, and he killed five hundred thousand of Jereboam's men.

All these soldiers were Jews—all lived in Palestine, a poor miserable little country about one-quarter as large as the State of New York. Yet one million two hundred thousand soldiers were put in the field. This required a population in the country of ten or twelve millions. Of course this is absurd. Palestine

in its palmiest days could not have supported two millions of people.

The soil is poor.

If the Bible is inspired, is it true?

We are told by this inspired book of the gold and silver collected by King David for the temple—the temple afterward completed by the virtuous Solomon.

According to the blessed Bible, David collected about two thousand million dollars in silver, and five thousand million dollars in gold, making a total of seven thousand million dollars.

Is this true?

There is in the bank of France at the present time (1895) nearly six hundred million dollars, and so far as we know, it is the greatest amount that was ever gathered together. All the gold now known, coined and in bullion, does not amount to much more than the sum collected by David.

Seven thousand millions. Where did David get this gold? The Jews had no commerce. They owned no ships. They had no great factories, they produced nothing for other countries. There were no gold or silver mines in Palestine. Where then was this gold, this silver found? I will tell you: In

the imagination of a writer who had more patriotism than intelligence, and who wrote, not for the sake of truth, but for the glory of the Jews.

Is it possible that David collected nearly eight thousand tons of gold—that he by economy got together about sixty thousand tons of silver, making a total of gold and silver of sixty-eight thousand tons?

The average freight car carries about fifteen tons—David's gold and silver would load about four thousand five hundred and thirty-three cars, making a train about thirty-two miles in length. And all this for the temple at Jerusalem, a building ninety feet long and forty-five feet high and thirty wide, to which was attached a porch thirty feet wide, ninety feet long and one hundred and eighty feet high.

Probably the architect was inspired.

Is there a sensible man in the world who believes that David collected seven thousand million dollars worth of gold or silver?

There is hardly five thousand million dollars of gold now used as money in the whole world. Think of the millions taken from the mines of California, Australia and Africa during the present century and yet the total scarcely exceeds the amount collected by King David more than a thousand years before

the birth of Christ. Evidently the inspired historian made a mistake.

It required a little imagination and a few ciphers to change seven million dollars or seven hundred thousand dollars into seven thousand million dollars. Drop four ciphers and the story becomes fairly reasonable.

The Old Testament must be thrown aside. It is no longer a foundation. It has crumbled.

## II.

## THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BUT we have the New Testament, the sequel of the Old, in which Christians find the fulfillment of prophecies made by inspired Jews.

The New Testament vouches for the truth, the inspiration, of the Old, and if the old is false, the New cannot be true.

In the New Testament we find all that we know about the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

It is claimed that the writers were divinely inspired, and that all they wrote is true.

Let us see if these writers agree.

Certainly there should be no difference about the birth of Christ. From the Christian's point of view, nothing could have been of greater importance than that event.

Matthew says: "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the King, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem.

"Saying, where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him."

Matthew does not tell us who these wise men were, from what country they came, to what race they belonged. He did not even know their names.

We are also informed that when Herod heard these things he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him; that he gathered the chief priests and asked of them where Christ should be born and they told him that he was to be born in Bethlehem.

Then Herod called the wise men and asked them when the star appeared, and told them to go to Bethlehem and report to him.

When they left Herod, the star again appeared and went before them until it stood over the place where the child was.

When they came to the child they worshiped him,—gave him gifts, and being warned by God in a dream, they went back to their own country without calling on Herod.

Then the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him to take Mary and the child into Egypt for fear of Herod.

So Joseph took Mary and the child to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod.

Then Herod, finding that he was mocked by the wise men, "sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem and in all the coasts thereof from two years old and under."

After the death of Herod an angel again appeared in a dream to Joseph and told him to take mother and child and go back to Palestine.

So he went back and dwelt in Nazareth.

Is this story true? Must we believe in the star and the wise men? Who were these wise men? From what country did they come? What interest had they in the birth of the King of the Jews? What became of them and their star?

Of course I know that the Holy Catholic Church has in her keeping the three skulls that belonged to these wise men, but I do not know where the church obtained these relics, nor exactly how their genuineness has been established.

Must we believe that Herod murdered the babes of Bethlehem?

Is it not wonderful that the enemies of Herod did not charge him with this horror? Is it not marvel-

ous that Mark and Luke and John forgot to mention this most heartless of massacres?

Luke also gives an account of the birth of Christ. He says that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be taxed; that this was when Cyrenius was governor of Syria; that in accordance with this decree, Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem to be taxed; that at that place Christ was born and laid in a manger. He also says that shepherds, in the neighborhood, were told of the birth by an angel, with whom was a multitude of the heavenly host; that these shepherds visited Mary and the child, and told others what they had seen and heard.

He tells us that after eight days the child was named, Jesus; that forty days after his birth he was taken by Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem, and that after they had performed all things according to the law they returned to Nazareth. Luke also says that the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, and that his parents went every year to Jerusalem.

Do the accounts in Matthew and Luke agree? Can both accounts be true?

Luke never heard of the star, and Matthew knew nothing of the heavenly host. Luke never heard of

the wise men, nor Matthew of the shepherds. Luke knew nothing of the hatred of Herod, the murder of the babes or the flight into Egypt. According to Matthew, Joseph, warned by an angel, took Mary and the child and fled into Egypt. According to Luke they all went to Jerusalem, and from there back to Nazareth.

Both of these accounts cannot be true. Will some Christian scholar tell us which to believe?

When was Christ born?

Luke says that it took place when Cyrenius was governor. Here is another mistake. Cyrenius was not appointed governor until after the death of Herod, and the taxing could not have taken place until ten years after the alleged birth of Christ.

According to Luke, Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth, and for the purpose of getting them to Bethlehem, so that the child could be born in the right place, the taxing under Cyrenius was used, but the writer, being "inspired" made a mistake of about ten years as to the time of the taxing and of the birth.

Matthew says nothing about the date of the birth, except that he was born when Herod was king. It is now known that Herod had been dead ten years

before the taxing under Cyrenius. So, if Luke tells the truth, Joseph, being warned by an angel, fled from the hatred of Herod ten years after Herod was dead. If Matthew and Luke are both right Christ was taken to Egypt ten years before he was born, and Herod killed the babes ten years after he was dead.

Will some Christian scholar have the goodness to harmonize these "inspired" accounts?

There is another thing.

Matthew and Luke both try to show that Christ was of the blood of David, that he was a descendant of that virtuous king.

As both of these writers were inspired and as both received their information from God, they ought to agree.

According to Matthew there was between David and Jesus twenty-seven generations, and he gives all the names.

According to Luke there were between David and Jesus forty-two generations, and he gives all the names.

In these genealogies—both inspired—there is a difference between David and Jesus, a difference of some fourteen or fifteen generations.

Besides, the names of all the ancestors are different, with two exceptions.

Matthew says that Joseph's father was Jacob. Luke says that Heli was Joseph's father.

Both of these genealogies cannot be true, and the probability is that both are false.

There is not in all the pulpits ingenuity enough to harmonize these ignorant and stupid contradictions.

There are many curious mistakes in the words attributed to Christ.

We are told in Matthew, chapter xxiii, verse 35, that Christ said:

"That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar."

It is certain that these words were not spoken by Christ. He could not by any possibility have known that the blood of Zacharias had been shed. As a matter of fact, Zacharias was killed by the Jews, during the seige of Jerusalem by Titus, and this seige took place seventy-one years after the birth of Christ, thirty-eight years after he was dead.

There is still another mistake.

Zacharias was not the son of Barachias—no such

Zacharias was killed. The Zacharias that was slain was the son of Baruch.

But we must not expect the "inspired" to be accurate.

Matthew says that at the time of the crucifixion—"the graves were opened and that many bodies of the saints which slept arose and came out of their graves *after* his resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many."

According to this the graves were opened at the time of the crucifixion, but the dead did not arise and come out until after the resurrection of Christ.

They were polite enough to sit in their open graves and wait for Christ to rise first.

To whom did these saints appear? What became of them? Did they slip back into their graves and commit suicide?

Is it not wonderful that Mark, Luke and John never heard of these saints?

What kind of saints were they? Certainly they were not Christian saints.

So, the inspired writers do not agree in regard to Judas.

Certainly the inspired writers ought to have known what happened to Judas, the betrayer. Matthew

being duly "inspired" says that when Judas saw that Jesus had been condemned, he repented and took back the money to the chief priests and elders, saying that he had sinned in betraying the innocent blood. They said to him: "What is that to us? See thou to that." Then Judas threw down the pieces of silver and went and hanged himself.

The chief priests then took the pieces of silver and bought the potter's field to bury strangers in, and it is called the field of blood.

We are told in Acts of the apostles that Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples and said: "Now this man, (Judas) purchased a field with the reward of iniquity—and falling headlong he burst asunder and all his bowels gushed out—that field is called the field of blood."

Matthew says Judas repented and gave back the money.

Peter says that he bought a field with the money.

Matthew says that Judas hanged himself. Peter says that he fell down and burst asunder. Which of these accounts is true?

Besides, it is hard to see why Christians hate, loathe and despise Judas. According to their scheme of salvation, it was absolutely necessary that Christ

should be killed — necessary that he should be betrayed, and had it not been for Judas, all the world, including Christ's mother, and the part of Christ that was human, would have gone to hell.

Yet, according to the New Testament, Christ did not know that one of his disciples was to betray him.

Jesus, when on his way to Jerusalem, for the last time, said, speaking to the twelve disciples, Judas being present, that they, the disciples should thereafter sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Yet, more than a year before this journey, John says that Christ said, speaking to the twelve disciples: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil." And John adds: "He spake of Judas Iscariot, for it was he that should betray him."

Why did Christ a year afterward, tell Judas that he should sit on a throne and judge one of the tribes of Israel?

There is still another trouble.

Paul says that Jesus after his resurrection appeared to the twelve disciples. According to Paul, Jesus appeared to Judas with the rest.

Certainly Paul had not heard the story of the betrayal.

Why did Christ select Judas as one of his disciples, knowing that he would betray him? Did he desire to be betrayed? Was it his intention to be put to death?

Why did he fail to defend himself before Pilate?

According to the accounts, Pilate wanted to save him. Did Christ wish to be convicted?

The Christians are compelled to say that Christ intended to be sacrificed—that he selected Judas with that end in view, and that he refused to defend himself because he desired to be crucified. All this is in accordance with the horrible idea that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

## III.

## JEHOVAH.

GOD the Father.

The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the God of the Christians.

He it was who created the Universe, who made all substance, all force, all life, from nothing. He it is who has governed and still governs the world. He has established and destroyed empires and kingdoms, despotisms and republics. He has enslaved and liberated the sons of men. He has caused the sun to rise on the good and on the evil, and his rain to fall on the just and the unjust.

This shows his goodness.

He has caused his volcanoes to devour the good and the bad, his cyclones to wreck and rend the generous and the cruel, his floods to drown the loving and the hateful, his lightning to kill the virtuous and the vicious, his famines to starve the innocent and criminal and his plagues to destroy the wise and good, the ignorant and wicked. He has allowed his

enemies to imprison, to torture and to kill his friends. He has permitted blasphemers to flay his worshipers alive, to dislocate their joints upon racks, and to burn them at the stake. He has allowed men to enslave their brothers and to sell babes from the breasts of mothers.

This shows his impartiality.

The pious negro who commenced his prayer: "O thou great and unscrupulous God," was nearer right than he knew.

Ministers ask: Is it possible for God to forgive man?

And when I think of what has been suffered—of the centuries of agony and tears, I ask: Is it possible for man to forgive God?

How do Christians prove the existence of their God? Is it possible to think of an infinite being? Does the word God correspond with any image in the mind? Does the word God stand for what we know or for what we do not know?

Is not this unthinkable God a guess, an inference?

Can we think of a being without form, without body, without parts, without passions? Why should we speak of a being without body as of the masculine gender?

Why should the Bible speak of this God as a man? —of his walking in the garden in the cool of the evening—of his talking, hearing and smelling? If he has no passions why is he spoken of as jealous, revengeful, angry, pleased and loving?

In the Bible God is spoken of as a person in the form of man, journeying from place to place, as having a home and occupying a throne. These ideas have been abandoned, and now the Christian's God is the infinite, the incomprehensible, the formless, bodiless and passionless.

Of the existence of such a being there can be, in the nature of things, no evidence.

Confronted with the universe, with fields of space sown thick with stars, with all there is of life, the wise man, being asked the origin and destiny of all, replies: "I do not know. These questions are beyond the powers of my mind." The wise man is thoughtful and modest. He clings to facts. Beyond his intellectual horizon he does not pretend to see. He does not mistake hope for evidence or desire for demonstration. He is honest. He neither deceives himself nor others.

The theologian arrives at the unthinkable, the inconceivable, and he calls this God. The scientist

arrives at the unthinkable, the inconceivable, and calls it the Unknown.

The theologian insists that his inconceivable governs the world, that it, or he, or they, can be influenced by prayers and ceremonies, that it, or he, or they, punishes and rewards, that it, or he, or they, has priests and temples.

The scientist insist that the Unknown is not changed so far as he knows by prayers of people or priests. He admits that he does not know whether the Unknown is good or bad — whether he, or it, wants or whether he, or it, is worthy of worship. He does not say that the Unknown is God, that it created substance and force, life and thought. He simply says that of the Unknown he knows nothing.

Why should Christians insist that a God of infinite wisdom, goodness and power governs the world?

Why did he allow millions of his children to be enslaved? Why did he allow millions of mothers to be robbed of their babes? Why has he allowed injustice to triumph? Why has he permitted the innocent to be imprisoned and the good to be burned? Why has he withheld his rain and starved millions of the children of men? Why has he allowed the volcanoes to destroy, the earthquakes to devour, and the tempest to wreck and rend?

## IV.

## THE TRINITY.

THE New Testament informs us that Christ was the son of Joseph and the son of God, and that Mary was his mother.

How is it established that Christ was the son of God?

It is said that Joseph was told so in a dream by an angel.

But Joseph wrote nothing on that subject—said nothing so far as we know. Mary wrote nothing, said nothing. The angel that appeared to Joseph or that informed Joseph said nothing to anybody else. Neither has the Holy Ghost, the supposed father, ever said or written one word. We have received no information from the parties who could have known anything on the subject. We get all our facts from those who could not have known.

How is it possible to prove that the Holy Ghost was the father of Christ?

Who knows that such a being as the Holy Ghost ever existed?

How was it possible for Mary to know anything about the Holy Ghost?

How could Joseph know that he had been visited by an angel in a dream?

Could he know that the visitor was an angel? It all occurred in a dream and poor Joseph was asleep. What is the testimony of one who was asleep worth?

All the evidence we have is that somebody who wrote part of the New Testament says that the Holy Ghost was the father of Christ, and that somebody who wrote another part of the New Testament says that Joseph was the father of Christ.

Matthew and Luke give the genealogy and both show that Christ was the son of Joseph.

The "Incarnation" has to be believed without evidence. There is no way in which it can be established. It is beyond the reach and realm of reason. It defies observation and is independent of experience.

It is claimed not only that Christ was the Son of God, but that he was, and is, God.

Was he God before he was born? Was the body of Mary the dwelling place of God?

What evidence have we that Christ was God?

Somebody has said that Christ claimed that God was his father and that he and his father were one. We do not know who this somebody was and do not know from whom he received his information.

Somebody who was "inspired" has said that Christ was of the blood of David through his father Joseph.

This is all the evidence we have.

Can we believe that God, the creator of the Universe, learned the trade of a carpenter in Palestine, that he gathered a few disciples about him, and after teaching for about three years, suffered himself to be crucified by a few ignorant and pious Jews?

Christ, according to the faith, is the second person in the Trinity, the Father being the first and the Holy Ghost the third. Each of these three persons is God. Christ is his own father and his own son. The Holy Ghost is neither father nor son, but both. The son was begotten by the father, but existed before he was begotten—just the same before as after. Christ is just as old as his father, and the father is just as young as his son. The Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father and Son, but was equal to the Father and Son before he proceeded, that is

to say, before he existed, but he is of the same age of the other two.

So, it is declared that the Father is God, and the Son God and the Holy Ghost God, and that these three Gods make one God.

According to the celestial multiplication table, once one is three, and three times one is one, and according to heavenly subtraction if we take two from three, three are left. The addition is equally peculiar, if we add two to one we have but one. Each one is equal to himself and the other two. Nothing ever was, nothing ever can be more perfectly idiotic and absurd than the dogma of the Trinity.

How is it possible to prove the existence of the Trinity?

Is it possible for a human being, who has been born but once, to comprehend, or to imagine the existence of three beings, each of whom is equal to the three?

Think of one of these beings as the father of one, and think of that one as half human and all God, and think of the third as having proceeded from the other two, and then think of all three as one. Think that after the father begot the son, the father was

still alone, and after the Holy Ghost proceeded from the father and the son, the father was still alone—because there never was and never will be but one God.

At this point, absurdity having reached its limit, nothing more can be said except: "Let us pray."

## V.

## THE THEOLOGICAL CHRIST.

IN the New Testament we find the teachings and sayings of Christ. If we say that the book is inspired, then we must admit that Christ really said all the things attributed to him by the various writers. If the book is inspired we must accept it all. We have no right to reject the contradictory and absurd and accept the reasonable and good. We must take it all just as it is.

My own observation has led me to believe that men are generally consistent in their theories and inconsistent in their lives.

So, I think that Christ in his utterances was true to his theory, to his philosophy.

If I find in the Testament sayings of a contradictory character, I conclude that some of those sayings were never uttered by him. The sayings that are, in my judgment, in accordance with what I believe

to have been his philosophy, I accept, and the others I throw away.

There are some of his sayings which show him to have been a devout Jew, others that he wished to destroy Judaism, others showing that he held all people except the Jews in contempt and that he wished to save no others, others showing that he wished to convert the world, still others showing that he was forgiving, self-denying and loving, others that he was revengeful and malicious, others, that he was an ascetic, holding all human ties in utter contempt.

The following passages show that Christ was a devout Jew.

"Swear not, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by the earth for it is his footstool, neither by Jerusalem for it is his holy city."

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill."

"For after all these things, (clothing, food and drink) do the Gentiles seek."

So, when he cured a leper, he said: "Go thy way, show thyself unto the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded."

Jesus sent his disciples forth saying: "Go not into

the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

A woman came out of Canaan and cried to Jesus: "Have mercy on me, my daughter is sorely vexed with a devil"—but he would not answer. Then the disciples asked him to send her away, and he said: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Then the woman worshiped him and said: "Lord help me." But he answered and said: "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it unto dogs." Yet for her faith he cured her child.

So, when the young man asked him what he must do to be saved, he said: "Keep the commandments."

Christ said: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do."

"And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."

Christ went into the temple and cast out them that sold and bought there, and said: "It is written, my house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves."

"We know what we worship for salvation is of the Jews."

Certainly all these passages were written by persons who regarded Christ as the Messiah.

Many of the sayings attributed to Christ show that he was an ascetic, that he cared nothing for kindred, nothing for father and mother, nothing for brothers or sisters, and nothing for the pleasures of life.

Christ said to a man: "Follow me." The man said: "Suffer me first to go and bury my father." Christ answered: "Let the dead bury their dead." Another said: "I will follow thee, but first let me go bid them farewell which are at home."

Jesus said: "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God. If thine right eye offend thee pluck it out. If thy right hand offend thee cut it off."

One said unto him: "Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee." And he answered: "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" Then he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples and said: "Behold my mother and my brethren."

"And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren or sisters, or father or mother, or wife or

children, or lands for my name's sake shall receive an hundred fold and shall inherit everlasting life."

"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

Christ it seems had a philosophy.

He believed that God was a loving father, that he would take care of his children, that they need do nothing except to rely implicitly on God.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. * * * For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

"Ask and it shall be given you. Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. If ye forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will also forgive you. The very hairs of your head are all numbered."

Christ seemed to rely absolutely on the protection of God until the darkness of death gathered about

him, and then he cried: "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?"

While there are many passages in the New Testament showing Christ to have been forgiving and tender, there are many others showing that he was exactly the opposite.

What must have been the spirit of one who said: "I am come to send fire on the earth? Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, nay, but rather division. For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father, the mother against the daughter and the daughter against the mother, the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

"If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

"But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me."

This passage built dungeons and lighted fagots.

"Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

"I came not to bring peace but a sword."

All these sayings could not have been uttered by the same person. They are inconsistent with each other. Love does not speak the words of hatred. The real philanthropist does not despise all nations but his own. The teacher of universal forgiveness cannot believe in eternal torture.

From the interpolations, legends, accretions, mistakes and falsehoods in the New Testament is it possible to free the actual man? Clad in mist and myth, hidden by the draperies of gods, deformed, indistinct as faces in clouds, is it possible to find and recognize the features, the natural face of the actual Christ?

For many centuries our fathers closed their eyes to the contradictions and inconsistencies of the Testament and in spite of their reason harmonized the interpolations and mistakes.

This is no longer possible. The contradictions are too many, too glaring. There are contradictions of fact not only, but of philosophy, of theory.

The accounts of the trial, the crucifixion, and ascen-

sion of Christ do not agree. They are full of mistakes and contradictions.

According to one account Christ ascended the day of, or the day after his resurrection. According to another he remained forty days after rising from the dead. According to one account, he was seen after his resurrection only by a few women and his disciples. According to another he was seen by the women, by his disciples on several occasions and by hundreds of others.

According to Matthew, Luke and Mark, Christ remained for the most part in the country, seldom going to Jerusalem. According to John he remained mostly in Jerusalem, going occasionally into the country, and then generally to avoid his enemies.

According to Matthew, Mark and Luke, Christ taught that if you would forgive others God would forgive you. According to John, Christ said that the only way to get to heaven was to believe on him and be born again.

These contradictions are gross and palpable and demonstrate that the New Testament is not inspired, and that many of its statements must be false.

If we wish to save the character of Christ, many of the passages must be thrown away.

We must discard the miracles or admit that he was insane or an impostor. We must discard the passages that breathe the spirit of hatred and revenge, or admit that he was malevolent.

If Matthew was mistaken about the genealogy of Christ, about the wise men, the star, the flight into Egypt and the massacre of the babes by Herod,— then he may have been mistaken in many passages that he put in the mouth of Christ.

The same may be said in regard to Mark, Luke and John.

The church must admit that the writers of the New Testament were uninspired men — that they made many mistakes, that they accepted impossible legends as historical facts, that they were ignorant and superstitious, that they put malevolent, stupid, insane and unworthy words in the mouth of Christ, described him as the worker of impossible miracles and in many ways stained and belittled his character.

The best that can be said about Christ is that nearly nineteen centuries ago he was born in the land of Palestine in a country without wealth, without commerce, in the midst of a people who knew nothing of the greater world — a people enslaved,

crushed by the mighty power of Rome. That this babe, this child of poverty and want grew to manhood without education, knowing nothing of art, or science, and at about the age of thirty began wandering about the hills and hamlets of his native land, discussing with priests, talking with the poor and sorrowful, writing nothing, but leaving his words in the memory or forgetfulness of those to whom he spoke.

That he attacked the religion of his time because it was cruel. That this excited the hatred of those in power, and that Christ was arrested, tried and crucified.

For many centuries this great Peasant of Palestine has been worshiped as God.

Millions and millions have given their lives to his service. The wealth of the world was lavished on his shrines. His name carried consolation to the diseased and dying. His name dispelled the darkness of death, and filled the dungeon with light. His name gave courage to the martyr, and in the midst of fire, with shriveling lips the sufferer uttered it again and again. The outcasts, the deserted, the fallen, felt that Christ was their friend, felt that he knew their sorrows and pitied their sufferings.

The poor mother, holding her dead babe in her arms, lovingly whispered his name. His gospel has been carried by millions to all parts of the globe, and his story has been told by the self-denying and faithful to countless thousands of the sons of men. In his name have been preached charity, — forgiveness and love.

He it was, who according to the faith, brought immortality to light, and many millions have entered the valley of the shadow with their hands in his.

All this is true, and if it were all, how beautiful, how touching, how glorious it would be. But it is not all. There is another side.

In his name millions and millions of men and women have been imprisoned, tortured and killed. In his name millions and millions have been enslaved. In his name the thinkers, the investigators, have been branded as criminals, and his followers have shed the blood of the wisest and best. In his name the progress of many nations was stayed for a thousand years. In his gospel was found the dogma of eternal pain, and his words added an infinite horror to death. His gospel filled the world with hatred and revenge; made intellectual honesty a crime; made happiness here the road to hell, denounced love as

base and bestial, canonized credulity, crowned bigotry and destroyed the liberty of man.

It would have been far better had the New Testament never been written—far better had the theological Christ never lived. Had the writers of the Testament been regarded as uninspired, had Christ been thought of only as a man, had the good been accepted and the absurd, the impossible, and the revengeful thrown away, mankind would have escaped the wars, the tortures, the scaffolds, the dungeons, the agony and tears, the crimes and sorrows of a thousand years.

## VI.

## THE "SCHEME."

WE have also the scheme of redemption. According to this "scheme," by the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, human nature became evil, corrupt and depraved. It became impossible for human beings to keep, in all things, the law of God. In spite of this, God allowed the people to live and multiply for some fifteen hundred years, and then on account of their wickedness drowned them all with the exception of eight persons.

The nature of these eight persons was evil, corrupt and depraved, and in the nature of things their children would be cursed with the same nature. Yet God gave them another trial, knowing exactly what the result would be. A few of these wretches he selected and made them objects of his love and care, the rest of the world he gave to indifference and neglect. To civilize the people he had chosen, he assisted them in conquering and killing their neighbors, and gave them the assistance of priests and

inspired prophets. For their preservation and punishment he wrought countless miracles, gave them many laws and a great deal of advice. He taught them to sacrifice oxen, sheep, and doves, to the end that their sins might be forgiven. The idea was inculcated that there was a certain relation between the sin and the sacrifice,—the greater the sin, the greater the sacrifice. He also taught the savagery that without the shedding of blood there was no remission of sin.

In spite of all his efforts, the people grew gradually worse. They would not, they could not keep his laws.

A sacrifice had to be made for the sins of the people. The sins were too great to be washed out by the blood of animals or men. It became necessary for God himself to be sacrificed. All mankind were under the curse of the law. Either all the world must be lost or God must die.

In only one way could the guilty be justified, and that was by the death, the sacrifice of the innocent. And the innocent being sacrificed must be great enough to atone for the world. There was but one such being—God.

Thereupon God took upon himself flesh, was

born into the world—was known as Christ—was murdered, sacrificed by the Jews, and became an atonement for the sins of the human race.

This is the scheme of Redemption,—the atonement.

It is impossible to conceive of anything more utterly absurd.

A man steals, and then sacrifices a dove, or gives a lamb to a priest. His crime remains the same. He need not kill something. Let him give back the thing stolen, and in future live an honest life.

A man slanders his neighbor and then kills an ox. What has that to do with the slander. Let him take back his slander, make all the reparation that he can, and let the ox alone.

There is no sense in sacrifice, never was and never will be.

Make restitution, reparation, undo the wrong and you need shed no blood.

A good law, one springing from the nature of things, cannot demand, and cannot accept, and cannot be satisfied with the punishment, or the agony of the innocent. A god could not accept his own sufferings in justification of the guilty.—This is a complete subversion of all ideas of justice and morality. A

god could not make a law for man, then suffer in the place of the man who had violated it, and say that the law had been carried out, and the penalty duly enforced. A man has committed murder, has been tried, convicted and condemned to death. Another man goes to the governor and says that he is willing to die in place of the murderer. The governor says: "All right, I accept your offer, a murder has been committed, somebody must be hung and your death will satisfy the law."

But that is not the law. The law says, not that somebody shall be hanged, but that the murderer shall suffer death.

Even if the governor should die in the place of the criminal, it would be no better. There would be two murders instead of one, two innocent men killed, one by the first murderer and one by the State, and the real murderer free.

This, Christians call, "satisfying the law"

## VII.

## BELIEF.

WE are told that all who believe in this scheme of redemption and have faith in the redeemer will be rewarded with eternal joy. Some think that men can be saved by faith without works, and some think that faith and works are both essential, but all agree that without faith there is no salvation. If you repent and believe on Jesus Christ, then his goodness will be imputed to you and the penalty of the law, so far as you are concerned, will be satisfied by the sufferings of Christ.

You may repent and reform, you may make restitution, you may practice all the virtues, but without this belief in Christ, the gates of heaven will be shut against you forever.

Where is this heaven? The Christians do not know.

Does the Christian go there at death, or must he wait for the general resurrection?

They do not know.

The Testament teaches that the bodies of the dead are to be raised? Where are their souls in the meantime? They do not know.

Can the dead be raised? The atoms composing their bodies enter into new combinations, into new forms, into wheat and corn, into the flesh of animals and into the bodies of other men. Where one man dies, and some of his atoms pass into the body of another man and he dies, to whom will these atoms belong in the day of resurrection?

If Christianity were only stupid and unscientific, if its God was ignorant and kind, if it promised eternal joy to believers and if the believers practiced the forgiveness they teach, for one I should let the faith alone.

But there is another side to Christianity. It is not only stupid, but malicious. It is not only unscientific, but it is heartless. Its god is not only ignorant, but infinitely cruel. It not only promises the faithful an eternal reward, but declares that nearly all of the children of men, imprisoned in the dungeons of God will suffer eternal pain. This is the savagery of Christianity. This is why I hate its unthinkable God, its impossible Christ, its inspired lies, and its selfish, heartless heaven.

Christians believe in infinite torture, in eternal pain.

Eternal Pain!

All the meanness of which the heart of man is capable is in that one word—Hell.

That word is a den, a cave, in which crawl the slimy reptiles of revenge.

That word certifies to the savagery of primitive man.

That word is the depth, the dungeon, the abyss, from which civilized man has emerged.

That word is the disgrace, the shame, the infamy, of our revealed religion.

That word fills all the future with the shrieks of the damned.

That word brutalizes the New Testament, changes the Sermon on the Mount to hypocrisy and cant, and pollutes and hardens the very heart of Christ.

That word adds an infinite horror to death, and makes the cradle as terrible as the coffin.

That word is the assassin of joy, the mocking murderer of hope. That word extinguishes the light of life and wraps the world in gloom. That word drives reason from his throne, and gives the crown to madness.

That word drove pity from the hearts of men, stained countless swords with blood, lighted fagots, forged chains, built dungeons, erected scaffolds, and filled the world with poverty and pain.

That word is a coiled serpent in the mother's breast, that lifts its fanged head and hisses in her ear :—"Your child will be the fuel of eternal fire."

That word blots from the firmament the star of hope and leaves the heavens black.

That word makes the Christian's God an eternal torturer, an everlasting inquisitor — an infinite wild beast.

This is the Christian prophecy of the eternal future:

No hope in hell.

No pity in heaven.

No mercy in the heart of God.

## VIII.

## CONCLUSION.

THE Old Testament is absurd, ignorant and cruel,—the New Testament is a mingling of the false and true—it is good and bad.

The Jehovah of the Jews is an impossible monster. The Trinity absurd and idiotic, Christ is a myth or a man.

The fall of man is contradicted by every fact concerning human history that we know. The scheme of redemption—through the atonement—is immoral and senseless. Hell was imagined by revenge, and the orthodox heaven is the selfish dream of heartless serfs and slaves. The foundations of the faith have crumbled and faded away. They were miracles, mistakes, and myths, ignorant and untrue, absurd, impossible, immoral, unnatural, cruel, childish, savage. Beneath the gaze of the scientist they vanished, confronted by facts they disappeared. The

orthodox religion of our day has no foundation in truth. Beneath the superstructure can be found no fact.

Some may ask, "Are you trying to take our religion away?"

I answer No—superstition is not religion. Belief without evidence is not religion. Faith without facts is not religion.

To love justice, to long for the right, to love mercy, to pity the suffering, to assist the weak, to forget wrongs and remember benefits—to love the truth, to be sincere, to utter honest words, to love liberty, to wage relentless war against slavery in all its forms, to love wife and child and friend, to make a happy home, to love the beautiful in art, in nature, to cultivate the mind, to be familiar with the mighty thoughts that genius has expressed, the noble deeds of all the world, to cultivate courage and cheerfulness, to make others happy, to fill life with the splendor of generous acts, the warmth of loving words, to discard error, to destroy prejudice, to receive new truths with gladness, to cultivate hope, to see the calm beyond the storm, the dawn beyond the night, to do the best that can be done and then to be resigned—this is the religion

of reason, the creed of science. This satisfies the brain and heart.

But, says the prejudiced priest, the malicious minister, "You take away a future life."

I am not trying to destroy another world, but I am endeavoring to prevent the theologians from destroying this.

If we are immortal it is a fact in nature, and that fact does not depend on bibles, or Christs, or priests or creeds.

The hope of another life was in the heart, long before the "sacred books" were written, and will remain there long after all the "sacred books" are known to be the work of savage and superstitious men. Hope is the consolation of the world.

The wanderers hope for home.—Hope builds the house and plants the flowers and fills the air with song.

The sick and suffering hope for health.—Hope gives them health and paints the roses in their cheeks.

The lonely, the forsaken, hope for love.—Hope brings the lover to their arms. They feel the kisses on their eager lips.

The poor in tenements and huts, in spite of rags

and hunger hope for wealth.—Hope fills their thin and trembling hands with gold.

The dying hopes that death is but another birth, and Love leans above the pallid face and whispers, "We shall meet again."

Hope is the consolation of the world.

Let us hope, if there be a God that he is wise and good.

Let us hope that if there be another life it will bring peace and joy to all the children of men.

And let us hope that this poor earth on which we live, may be a perfect world—a world without a crime—without a tear.

# SUPERSTITION.

# SUPERSTITION.

## I.

### WHAT IS SUPERSTITION?

To believe in spite of evidence or without evidence.

To account for one mystery by another.

To believe that the world is governed by chance or caprice.

To disregard the true relation between cause and effect.

To put thought, intention and design back of nature.

To believe that mind created and controls matter.

To believe in force apart from substance, or in substance apart from force.

To believe in miracles, spells and charms, in dreams and prophecies.

To believe in the supernatural.

The foundation of superstition is ignorance, the superstructure is faith and the dome is a vain hope.

Superstition is the child of ignorance and the mother of misery.

In nearly every brain is found some cloud of superstition.

A woman drops a cloth with which she is washing dishes, and she exclaims: "That means company."

Most people will admit that there is no possible connection between dropping the cloth and the coming of visitors. The falling cloth could not have put the visit desire in the minds of people not present, and how could the cloth produce the desire to visit the particular person who dropped it? There is no possible connection between the dropping of the cloth and the anticipated effects.

A man catches a glimpse of the new moon over his left shoulder, and he says: "This is bad luck."

To see the moon over the right or left shoulder, or not to see it, could not by any possibility affect the moon, neither could it change the effect or influence of the moon on any earthly thing. Certainly the left-shoulder glance could in no way affect the nature of things. All the facts in nature would remain the same as though the glance had been over the right shoulder. We see no connection between the left-shoulder glance and any possible evil effects upon the one who saw the moon in this way.

A girl counts the leaves of a flower, and she says: "One, he comes; two, he tarries; three, he courts; four, he marries; five, he goes away."

Of course the flower did not grow, and the number of its leaves was not determined with reference to the courtship or marriage of this girl, neither could there have been any intelligence that guided her hand when she selected that particular flower. So, counting the seeds in an apple cannot in any way determine whether the future of an individual is to be happy or miserable.

Thousands of persons believe in lucky and unlucky days, numbers, signs and jewels.

Many people regard Friday as an unlucky day—as a bad day to commence a journey, to marry, to make any investment. The only reason given is that Friday is an unlucky day.

Starting across the sea on Friday could have no possible effect upon the winds, or waves, or tides, any more than starting on any other day, and the only possible reason for thinking Friday unlucky is the assertion that it is so.

So it is thought by many that it is dangerous for thirteen people to dine together. Now, if thirteen is a dangerous number, twenty-six ought to be twice as dangerous, and fifty-two four times as terrible.

It is said that one of the thirteen will die in a year. Now, there is no possible relation between the number and the digestion of each, between the number and the individual diseases. If fourteen dine together there is greater probability, if we take into account only the number, of a death within the year, than there would be if only thirteen were at the table.

Overturning the salt is very unlucky, but spilling the vinegar makes no difference.

Why salt should be revengeful and vinegar forgiving has never been told.

If the first person who enters a theatre is cross-eyed, the audience will be small and the "run" a failure.

How the peculiarity of the eyes of the first one who enters, changes the intention of a community, or how the intentions of a community cause the cross-eyed man to go early, has never been satisfactorily explained. Between this so-called cause and the so-called effect there is, so far as we can see, no possible relation.

To wear an opal is bad luck, but rubies bring health. How these stones affect the future, how they destroy causes and defeat effects, no one pretends to know.

So, there are thousands of lucky and unlucky

things, warnings, omens and prophecies, but all sensible, sane and reasoning human beings know that every one is an absurd and idiotic superstition.

Let us take another step:

For many centuries it was believed that eclipses of the sun and moon were prophetic of pestilence or famine, and that comets foretold the death of kings, or the destruction of nations, the coming of war or plague. All strange appearances in the heavens—the Northern Lights, circles about the moon, sun dogs, falling stars—filled our intelligent ancestors with terror. They fell upon their knees—did their best with sacrifice and prayer to avoid the threatened disaster. Their faces were ashen with fear as they closed their eyes and cried to the heavens for help. The clergy, who were as familiar with God then as the orthodox preachers are now, knew exactly the meaning of eclipses and sun dogs and Northern Lights; knew that God's patience was nearly exhausted; that he was then whetting the sword of his wrath, and that the people could save themselves only by obeying the priests, by counting their beads and doubling their subscriptions.

Earthquakes and cyclones filled the coffers of the church. In the midst of disasters the miser, with trembling hands, opened his purse. In the gloom of

eclipses thieves and robbers divided their booty with God, and poor, honest, ignorant girls, remembering that they had forgotten to say a prayer, gave their little earnings to soften the heart of God.

Now we know that all these signs and wonders in the heavens have nothing to do with the fate of kings, nations or individuals; that they had no more reference to human beings than to colonies of ants, hives of bees or the eggs of insects. We now know that the signs and eclipses, the comets, and the falling stars, would have been just the same if not a human being had been upon the earth. We know now that eclipses come at certain times and that their coming can be exactly foretold.

A little while ago the belief was general that there were certain healing virtues in inanimate things, in the bones of holy men and women, in the rags that had been torn from the foul clothing of still fouler saints, in hairs from martyrs, in bits of wood and rusty nails from the true cross, in the teeth and finger nails of pious men, and in a thousand other sacred things.

The diseased were cured by kissing a box in which was kept some bone, or rag, or bit of wood, some holy hairs, provided the kiss was preceded or followed by a gift—a something for the church.

In some mysterious way the virtue in the bone, or rag, or piece of wood, crept or flowed from the box, took possession of the sick who had the necessary faith, and in the name of God drove out the devils who were the real disease.

This belief in the efficacy of bones or rags and holy hair was born of another belief—the belief that all diseases were produced by evil spirits. The insane were supposed to be possessed by devils. Epilepsy and hysteria were produced by the imps of Satan. In short, every human affliction was the work of the malicious emissaries of the god of hell. This belief was almost universal, and even in our time the sacred bones are believed in by millions of people.

But to-day no intelligent man believes in the existence of devils—no intelligent man believes that evil spirits cause disease—consequently, no intelligent person believes that holy bones or rags, sacred hairs or pieces of wood, can drive disease out, or in any way bring back to the pallid cheek the rose of health.

Intelligent people now know that the bone of a saint has in it no greater virtue than the bone of any animal. That a rag from a wandering beggar is just as good as one from a saint, and that the hair of a horse will cure disease just as quickly and surely as the hair of a martyr. We now know that all the sacred

relics are religious rubbish; that those who use them are for the most part dishonest, and that those who rely on them are almost idiotic.

This belief in amulets and charms, in ghosts and devils, is superstition, pure and simple.

Our ancestors did not regard these relics as medicine, having a curative power, but the idea was that evil spirits stood in dread of holy things—that they fled from the bone of a saint, that they feared a piece of the true cross, and that when holy water was sprinkled on a man they immediately left the premises. So, these devils hated and dreaded the sound of holy bells, the light of sacred tapers, and, above all, the ever-blessed cross.

In those days the priests were fishers for money, and they used these relics for bait.

## II.

Let us take another step:

This belief in the Devil and evil spirits laid the foundation for another belief: Witchcraft.

It was believed that the devil had certain things to give in exchange for a soul. The old man, bowed and broken, could get back his youth—the rounded form, the brown hair, the leaping heart of life's morning—if he would sign and seal away his soul. So, it was thought that the malicious could by charm and spell obtain revenge, that the poor could be enriched, and that the ambitious could rise to place and power. All the good things of this life were at the disposal of the Devil. For those who resisted the temptations of the Evil One, rewards were waiting in another world, but the Devil rewarded here in this life. No one has imagination enough to paint the agonies that were endured by reason of this belief in witchcraft. Think of the families destroyed, of the fathers and mothers cast in prison, tortured and burned, of the firesides darkened, of the children murdered, of the old, the poor and helpless that were stretched on racks mangled and flayed!

Think of the days when superstition and fear were

in every house, in every mind, when accusation was conviction, when assertion of innocence was regarded as a confession of guilt, and when Christendom was insane!

Now we know that all of these horrors were the result of superstition. Now we know that ignorance was the mother of all the agonies endured. Now we know that witches never lived, that human beings never bargained with any devil, and that our pious savage ancestors were mistaken.

Let us take another step:

Our fathers believed in miracles, in signs and wonders, eclipses and comets, in the virtues of bones, and in the powers attributed to evil spirits. All these belonged to the miraculous. The world was supposed to be full of magic; the spirits were sleight-of-hand performers—necromancers. There were no natural causes behind events. A devil wished, and it happened. One who had sold his soul to Satan made a few motions, uttered some strange words, and the event was present. Natural causes were not believed in. Delusion and illusion, the monstrous and miraculous, ruled the world. The foundation was gone—reason had abdicated. Credulity gave tongues and wings to lies, while the dumb and limping facts were left behind—were disregarded and remained untold.

## WHAT IS A MIRACLE?

An act performed by a master of nature without reference to the facts in nature. This is the only honest definition of a miracle.

If a man could make a perfect circle, the diameter of which was exactly one-half the circumference, that would be a miracle in geometry. If a man could make twice four, nine, that would be a miracle in mathematics. If a man could make a stone, falling in the air, pass through a space of ten feet the first second, twenty-five feet the second second, and five feet the third second, that would be a miracle in physics. If a man could put together hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen and produce pure gold, that would be a miracle in chemistry. If a minister were to prove his creed, that would be a theological miracle. If Congress by law would make fifty cents worth of silver worth a dollar, that would be a financial miracle. To make a square triangle would be a most wonderful miracle. To cause a mirror to reflect the faces of persons who stand behind it, instead of those who stand in front, would be a miracle. To make echo answer a question would be a miracle. In other words, to do anything contrary to or without regard to the facts in nature is to perform a miracle.

Now we are convinced of what is called the "uniformity of nature." We believe that all things act and are acted upon in accordance with their nature; that under like conditions the results will always be substantially the same; that like ever has and ever will produce like. We now believe that events have natural parents and that none die childless.

Miracles are not simply impossible, but they are unthinkable by any man capable of thinking.

Now an intelligent man cannot believe that a miracle ever was, or ever will be, performed.

Ignorance is the soil in which belief in miracles grows.

## III.

Let us take another step:

While our ancestors filled the darkness with evil spirits, enemies of mankind, they also believed in the existence of good spirits. These good spirits sustained the same relation to God that the evil ones did to the Devil. These good spirits protected the faithful from the temptations and snares of the Evil One. They took care of those who carried amulets and charms, of those who repeated prayers and counted beads, of those who fasted and performed ceremonies. These good spirits would turn aside the sword and arrow from the breast of the faithful. They made poison harmless, they protected the credulous, and in a thousand ways defended and rescued the true believer. They drove doubts from the minds of the pious, sowed the seeds of credulity and faith, saved saints from the wiles of women, painted the glories of heaven for those who fasted and prayed, made it possible for the really good to dispense with the pleasures of sense and to hate the Devil.

These angels watched over infants who had been baptized, over persons who had made holy vows, over priests and nuns and wandering beggars who believed.

These spirits were of various kinds: Some had once been men or women, some had never lived in this world, and some had been angels from the commencement. Nobody pretended to know exactly what they were, or exactly how they looked, or in what way they went from place to place, or how they affected or controlled the minds of men.

It was believed that the king of all these evil spirits was the Devil, and that the king of all the good spirits was God. It was also believed that God was in fact the king of all, and that the Devil himself was one of the children of this God. This God and this Devil were at war, each trying to secure the souls of men. God offered the rewards of eternal joy and threatened eternal pain. The Devil baited his traps with present pleasure, with the gratification of the senses, with the ecstasies of love, and laughed at the joys of heaven and the pangs of hell. With malicious hand he sowed the seeds of doubt—induced men to investigate, to reason, to call for evidence, to rely upon themselves; planted in their hearts the love of liberty, assisted them to break their chains, to escape from their prisons and besought them to think. In this way he corrupted the children of men.

Our fathers believed that they could by prayer, by sacrifice, by fasting, by performing certain cere-

monies, gain the assistance of this God and of these good spirits. They were not quite logical. They did not believe that the Devil was the author of all evil. They thought that flood and famine, plague and cyclone, earthquake and war, were sometimes sent by God as punishment for unbelief. They fell upon their knees and with white lips, prayed the good God to stay his hand. They humbled themselves, confessed their sins, and filled the heavens with their vows and cries. With priests and prayers they tried to stay the plague. They kissed the relics, fell at shrines, besought the Virgin and the saints, but the prayers all died in the heartless air, and the plague swept on to its natural end. Our poor fathers knew nothing of any science. Back of all events they put spirits, good or bad, angels or demons, gods or devils. To them nothing had what we call a natural cause. Everything was the work of spirits. All was done by the supernatural, and everything was done by evil spirits that they could do to ruin, punish, mislead and damn the children of men. This world was a field of battle, and here the hosts of heaven and hell waged war.

## IV.

Now no man in whose brain the torch of reason burns, no man who investigates, who really thinks, who is capable of weighing evidence, believes in signs, in lucky or unlucky days, in lucky or unlucky numbers. He knows that Fridays and Thursdays are alike; that thirteen is no more deadly than twelve. He knows that opals affect the wearer the same as rubies, diamonds or common glass. He knows that the matrimonial chances of a maiden are not increased or decreased by the number of leaves of a flower or seeds in an apple. He knows that a glance at the moon over the left shoulder is as healthful and lucky as one over the right. He does not care whether the first comer to a theatre is cross-eyed or hump-backed, bow-legged, or as well-proportioned as Apollo. He knows that a strange cat could be denied asylum without bringing any misfortune to the family. He knows that an owl does not hoot in the full of the moon because a distinguished man is about to die. He knows that comets and eclipses would come if all the folks were dead. He is not frightened by sun dogs, or the Morning of the North when the glittering lances pierce the shield of night.

He knows that all these things occur without the slightest reference to the human race. He feels certain that floods would destroy and cyclones rend and earthquakes devour; that the stars would shine; that day and night would still pursue each other around the world; that flowers would give their perfume to the air, and light would paint the seven-hued arch upon the dusky bosom of the cloud if every human being was unconscious dust.

A man of thought and sense does not believe in the existence of the Devil. He feels certain that imps, goblins, demons and evil spirits exist only in the imagination of the ignorant and frightened. He knows how these malevolent myths were made. He knows the part they have played in all religions. He knows that for many centuries a belief in these devils, these evil spirits, was substantially universal. He knows that the priest believed as firmly as the peasant. In those days the best educated and the most ignorant were equal dupes. Kings and courtiers, ladies and clowns, soldiers and artists, slaves and convicts, believed as firmly in the Devil as they did in God.

Back of this belief there is no evidence, and there never has been. This belief did not rest on any fact. It was supported by mistakes, exaggerations and

lies. The mistakes were natural, the exaggerations were mostly unconscious and the lies were generally honest. Back of these mistakes, these exaggerations, these lies, was the love of the marvelous. Wonder listened with greedy ears, with wide eyes, and ignorance with open mouth.

The man of sense knows the history of this belief, and he knows, also, that for many centuries its truth was established by the Holy Bible. He knows that the Old Testament is filled with allusions to the Devil, to evil spirits, and that the New Testament is the same. He knows that Christ himself was a believer in the Devil, in evil spirits, and that his principal business was casting out devils from the bodies of men and women. He knows that Christ himself, according to the New Testament, was not only tempted by the Devil, but was carried by his Satanic Highness to the top of the temple. If the New Testament is the inspired word of God, then I admit that these devils, these imps, do actually exist and that they do take possession of human beings.

To deny the existence of these evil spirits, to deny the existence of the Devil, is to deny the truth of the New Testament. To deny the existence of these imps of darkness is to contradict the words of Jesus Christ. If these devils do not exist, if they do not

cause disease, if they do not tempt and mislead their victims, then Christ was an ignorant, superstitious man, insane, an impostor, or the New Testament is not a true record of what he said and what he pretended to do. If we give up the belief in devils, we must give up the inspiration of the Old and New Testament. We must give up the divinity of Christ. To deny the existence of evil spirits is to utterly destroy the foundation of Christianity. There is no half-way ground. Compromise is impossible. If all the accounts in the New Testament of casting out devils are false, what part of the Blessed Book is true?

As a matter of fact, the success of the Devil in the Garden of Eden made the coming of Christ a necessity, laid the foundation for the atonement, crucified the Savior and gave us the Trinity.

If the Devil does not exist, the Christian creeds all crumble, and the superstructure known as "Christianity," built by the fathers, by popes, by priests and theologians—built with mistakes and falsehoods, with miracles and wonders, with blood and flame, with lies and legends borrowed from the savage world, becomes a shapeless ruin.

If we give up the belief in devils and evil spirits, we are compelled to say that a witch never lived. No

sensible human being now believes in witchcraft. We know that it was a delusion. We now know that thousands and thousands of innocent men, women and children were tortured and burned for having been found guilty of an impossible crime, and we also know, if our minds have not been deformed by faith, that all the books in which the existence of witches is taught were written by ignorant and superstitious men. We also know that the Old Testament asserted the existence of witches. According to that Holy Book, Jehovah was a believer in witchcraft, and said to his chosen people: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."

This one commandment—this simple line—demonstrates that Jehovah was not only not God, but that he was a poor, ignorant, superstitious savage. This one line proves beyond all possible doubt that the Old Testament was written by men, by barbarians.

John Wesley was right when he said that to give up a belief in witchcraft was to give up the Bible.

Give up the Devil, and what can you do with the Book of Job? How will you account for the lying spirits that Jehovah sent to mislead Ahab?

Ministers who admit that witchcraft is a superstition will read the story of the Witch of Endor—will read it in a solemn, reverential voice—with a theo-

logical voice—and will have the impudence to say that they believe it.

It would be delightful to know that angels hover in the air; that they guard the innocent, protect the good; that they bend over the cradles and give health and happy dreams to pallid babes; that they fill dungeons with the light of their presence and give hope to the imprisoned; that they follow the fallen, the erring, the outcasts, the friendless, and win them back to virtue, love and joy. But we have no more evidence of the existence of good spirits than of bad. The angels that visited Abraham and the mother of Samson are as unreal as the ghosts and goblins of the Middle Ages. The angel that stopped the donkey of Balaam, the one who walked in the furnace flames with Meshech, Shadrack and Abednego, the one who slew the Assyrians and the one who in a dream removed the suspicions of Joseph, were all created by the imagination of the credulous, by the lovers of the marvelous, and they have been handed down from dotage to infancy, from ignorance to ignorance, through all the years. Except in Catholic countries, no winged citizen of the celestial realm has visited the world for hundreds of years. Only those who are blind to facts can see these beautiful creatures, and only those who reach conclusions without the

assistance of evidence can believe in their existence. It is told that the great Angelo, in decorating a church, painted some angels wearing sandals. A cardinal looking at the picture said to the artist: "Whoever saw angels with sandals?" Angelo answered with another question: "Whoever saw an angel barefooted?"

The existence of angels has never been established. Of course, we know that millions and millions have believed in seraphim and cherubim; have believed that the angel Gabriel contended with the Devil for the body of Moses; that angels shut the mouths of the lions for the protection of Daniel; that angels ministered unto Christ, and that countless angels will accompany the Savior when he comes to take possession of the world. And we know that all these millions believe through blind, unreasoning faith, holding all evidence and all facts in theological contempt.

But the angels come no more. They bring no balm to any wounded heart. Long ago they folded their pinions and faded from the earth and air. These winged guardians no longer protect the innocent; no longer cheer the suffering; no longer whisper words of comfort to the helpless. They have become dreams—vanished visions.

## V.

In the dear old religious days the earth was flat—a little dishing, if anything—and just above it was Jehovah's house, and just below it was where the Devil lived. God and his angels inhabited the third story, the Devil and his imps the basement, and the human race the second floor.

Then they knew where heaven was. They could almost hear the harps and hallelujahs. They knew where hell was, and they could almost hear the groans and smell the sulphurous fumes. They regarded the volcanoes as chimneys. They were perfectly acquainted with the celestial, the terrestrial and the infernal. They were quite familiar with the New Jerusalem, with its golden streets and gates of pearl. Then the translation of Enoch seemed reasonable enough, and no one doubted that before the flood the sons of God came down and made love to the daughters of men. The theologians thought that the builders of Babel would have succeeded if God had not come down and caused them to forget the meaning of words.

In those blessed days the priests knew all about heaven and hell. They knew that God governed the world by hope and fear, by promise and threat, by

reward and punishment. The reward was to be eternal and so was the punishment. It was not God's plan to develop the human brain, so that man would perceive and comprehend the right and avoid the wrong. He taught ignorance nothing but obedience, and for obedience he offered eternal joy. He loved the submissive—the kneelers and crawlers. He hated the doubters, the investigators, the thinkers, the philosophers. For them he created the eternal prison where he could feed forever the hunger of his hate. He loved the credulous—those who believed without evidence—and for them he prepared a home in the realm of fadeless light. He delighted in the company of the questionless.

But where is this heaven, and where is this hell? We now know that heaven is not just above the clouds and that hell is not just below the earth. The telescope has done away with the ancient heaven, and the revolving world has quenched the flames of the ancient hell. These theological countries, these imagined worlds, have disappeared. No one knows, and no one pretends to know, where heaven is; and no one knows, and no one pretends to know, the locality of hell. Now the theologians say that hell and heaven are not places, but states of mind—conditions.

The belief in gods and devils has been substantially universal. Back of the good, man placed a god; back of the evil, a devil; back of health, sunshine and harvest was a good deity; back of disease, misfortune and death he placed a malicious fiend.

Is there any evidence that gods and devils exist? The evidence of the existence of a god and of a devil is substantially the same. Both of these deities are inferences; each one is a perhaps. They have not been seen—they are invisible—and they have not ventured within the horizon of the senses. The old lady who said there must be a devil, else how could they make pictures that looked exactly like him, reasoned like a trained theologian—like a doctor of divinity.

Now no intelligent man believes in the existence of a devil—no longer fears the leering fiend. Most people who think have given up a personal God, a creative deity. They now talk about the "Unknown," the "Infinite Energy," but they put Jehovah with Jupiter. They regard them both as broken dolls from the nursery of the past.

The men or women who ask for evidence—who desire to know the truth—care nothing for signs; nothing for what are called wonders; nothing for lucky or unlucky jewels, days or numbers; nothing

for charms or amulets; nothing for comets or eclipses, and have no belief in good or evil spirits, in gods or devils. They place no reliance on general or special providence—on any power that rescues, protects and saves the good or punishes the vile and vicious. They do not believe that in the whole history of mankind a prayer has been answered. They think that all the sacrifices have been wasted, and that all the incense has ascended in vain. They do not believe that the world was created and prepared for man any more than it was created and prepared for insects. They do not think it probable that whales were invented to supply the Eskimo with blubber, or that flames were created to attract and destroy moths. On every hand there seems to be evidence of design—design for the accomplishment of good, design for the accomplishment of evil. On every side are the benevolent and malicious—something toiling to preserve, something laboring to destroy. Everything surrounded by friends and enemies—by the love that protects, by the hate that kills. Design is as apparent in decay, as in growth; in failure, as in success; in grief, as in joy. Nature with one hand building, with one hand tearing down, armed with sword and shield—slaying and protecting, and protecting but to slay. All life journeying toward death, and all

death hastening back to life. Everywhere waste and economy, care and negligence.

We watch the flow and ebb of life and death—the great drama that forever holds the stage, where players act their parts and disappear; the great drama in which all must act—ignorant and learned, idiotic and insane—without rehearsal and without the slightest knowledge of a part, or of any plot or purpose in the play. The scene shifts; some actors disappear and others come, and again the scene shifts; mystery everywhere. We try to explain, and the explanation of one fact contradicts another. Behind each veil removed, another. All things equal in wonder. One drop of water as wonderful as all the seas; one grain of sand as all the world; one moth with painted wings as all the things that live; one egg from which warmth, in darkness, woos to life an organized and breathing form—a form with sinews, bones and nerves, with blood and brain, with instincts, passions, thoughts and wants—as all the stars that wheel in space.

The smallest seed that, wrapped in soil, has dreams of April rains and days of June, withholds its secret from the wisest men. The wisdom of the world cannot explain one blade of grass, the faintest motion of the smallest leaf. And yet theologians, popes,

priests, parsons, who speechless stand before the wonder of the smallest thing that is, know all about the origin of worlds, know when the beginning was, when the end will be, know all about the God who with a wish created all, know what his plan and purpose was, the means he uses and the end he seeks. To them all mysteries have been revealed, except the mystery of things that touch the senses of a living man.

But honest men do not pretend to know; they are candid and sincere; they love the truth; they admit their ignorance, and they say, "We do not know."

After all, why should we worship our ignorance, why should we kneel to the Unknown, why should we prostrate ourselves before a guess?

If God exists, how do we know that he is good, that he cares for us? The Christians say that their God has existed from eternity; that he forever has been, and forever will be, infinite, wise and good. Could this God have avoided being God? Could he have avoided being good? Was he wise and good without his wish or will?

Being from eternity, he was not produced. He was back of all cause. What he is, he was, and will be, unchanged, unchangeable. He had nothing to do with the making or developing of his character.

Nothing to do with the development of his mind. What he was, he is. He has made no progress. What he is, he will be, there can be no change. Why then, I ask, should we praise him? He could not have been different from what he was and is. Why should we pray to him? He cannot change.

And yet Christians implore their God not to do wrong.

The meanest thing charged against the Devil is that he leads the children of men into temptation, and yet, in the Lord's Prayer, God is insultingly asked not to imitate the king of fiends.

"Lead us not into temptation."

Why should God demand praise? He is as he was. He has never learned anything; has never practiced any self-denial; was never tempted, never touched by fear or hope, and never had a want. Why should he demand our praise?

Does anyone know that this God exists; that he ever heard or answered any prayer? Is it known that he governs the world; that he interferes in the affairs of men; that he protects the good or punishes the wicked? Can evidence of this be found in the history of mankind? If God governs the world, why should we credit him for the good and not charge him with the evil? To justify this God we

must say that good is good and that evil is also good. If all is done by this God we should make no distinction between his actions—between the actions of the infinitely wise, powerful and good. If we thank him for sunshine and harvest we should also thank him for plague and famine. If we thank him for liberty, the slave should raise his chained hands in worship and thank God that he toils unpaid with the lash upon his naked back. If we thank him for victory we should thank him for defeat.

Only a few days ago our President, by proclamation, thanked God for giving us the victory at Santiago. He did not thank him for sending the yellow fever. To be consistent the President should have thanked him equally for both.

The truth is that good and evil spirits—gods and devils—are beyond the realm of experience; beyond the horizon of our senses; beyond the limits of our thoughts; beyond imagination's utmost flight.

Man should think; he should use all his senses; he should examine; he should reason. The man who cannot think is less than man; the man who will not think is traitor to himself; the man who fears to think is superstition's slave.

## VI.

What harm does superstition do? What harm in believing in fables, in legends?

To believe in signs and wonders, in amulets, charms and miracles, in gods and devils, in heavens and hells, makes the brain an insane ward, the world a madhouse, takes all certainty from the mind, makes experience a snare, destroys the kinship of effect and cause—the unity of nature—and makes man a trembling serf and slave. With this belief a knowledge of nature sheds no light upon the path to be pursued. Nature becomes a puppet of the unseen powers. The fairy, called the supernatural, touches with her wand a fact, it disappears. Causes are barren of effects, and effects are independent of all natural causes. Caprice is king. The foundation is gone. The great dome rests on air. There is no constancy in qualities, relations or results. Reason abdicates and superstition wears her crown.

The heart hardens and the brain softens.

The energies of man are wasted in a vain effort to secure the protection of the supernatural. Credulity, ceremony, worship, sacrifice and prayer take the place of honest work, of investigation, of intellectual effort,

of observation, of experience. Progress becomes impossible.

Superstition is, always has been, and forever will be, the enemy of liberty.

Superstition created all the gods and angels, all the devils and ghosts, all the witches, demons and goblins, gave us all the augurs, soothsayers and prophets, filled the heavens with signs and wonders, broke the chain of cause and effect, and wrote the history of man in miracles and lies. Superstition made all the popes, cardinals, bishops and priests, all the monks and nuns, the begging friars and the filthy saints, all the preachers and exhorters, all the "called" and "set apart." Superstition made men fall upon their knees before beasts and stones, caused them to worship snakes and trees and insane phantoms of the air, beguiled them of their gold and toil, and made them shed their children's blood and give their babes to flames. Superstition built the cathedrals and temples, all the altars, mosques and churches, filled the world with amulets and charms, with images and idols, with sacred bones and holy hairs, with martyrs' blood and rags, with bits of wood that frighten devils from the breasts of men. Superstition invented and used the instruments of torture, flayed men and women alive, loaded millions with

chains and destroyed hundreds of thousands with fire. Superstition mistook insanity for inspiration and the ravings of maniacs for prophesy, for the wisdom of God. Superstition imprisoned the virtuous, tortured the thoughtful, killed the heroic, put chains on the body, manacles on the brain, and utterly destroyed the liberty of speech. Superstition gave us all the prayers and ceremonies; taught all the kneelings, genuflections and prostrations; taught men to hate themselves, to despise pleasure, to scar their flesh, to grovel in the dust, to desert their wives and children, to shun their fellow-men, and to spend their lives in useless pain and prayer. Superstition taught that human love is degrading, low and vile; taught that monks are purer than fathers, that nuns are holier than mothers, that faith is superior to fact, that credulity leads to heaven, that doubt is the road to hell, that belief is better than knowledge, and that to ask for evidence is to insult God. Superstition is, always has been, and forever will be, the foe of progress, the enemy of education and the assassin of freedom. It sacrifices the known to the unknown, the present to the future, this actual world to the shadowy next. It has given us a selfish heaven, and a hell of infinite revenge; it has filled the world with hatred, war and crime, with the malice of meekness

and the arrogance of humility. Superstition is the only enemy of science in all the world.

Nations, races, have been destroyed by this monster. For nearly two thousand years the infallible agent of God has lived in Italy. That country has been covered with nunneries, monasteries, cathedrals and temples—filled with all varieties of priests and holy men. For centuries Italy was enriched with the gold of the faithful. All roads led to Rome, and these roads were filled with pilgrims bearing gifts, and yet Italy, in spite of all the prayers, steadily pursued the downward path, died and was buried, and would at this moment be in her grave had it not been for Cavour, Mazzini and Garibaldi. For her poverty, her misery, she is indebted to the holy Catholic Church, to the infallible agents of God. For the life she has she is indebted to the enemies of superstition. A few years ago Italy was great enough to build a monument to Giordano Bruno—Bruno, the victim of the "Triumphant Beast;"—Bruno, the sublimest of her sons.

Spain was at one time owner of half the earth, and held within her greedy hands the gold and silver of the world. At that time all nations were in the darkness of superstition. At that time the world was governed by priests. Spain clung to her

creed. Some nations began to think, but Spain continued to believe. In some countries, priests lost power, but not in Spain. The power behind her throne was the cowled monk. In some countries men began to interest themselves in science, but not in Spain. Spain told her beads and continued to pray to the Virgin. Spain was busy saving her soul. In her zeal she destroyed herself. She relied on the supernatural; not on knowledge, but superstition. Her prayers were never answered. The saints were dead. They could not help, and the Blessed Virgin did not hear. Some countries were in the dawn of a new day, but Spain gladly remained in the night. With fire and sword she exterminated the men who thought. Her greatest festival was the *Auto da Fe.* Other nations grew great while Spain grew small. Day by day her power waned, but her faith increased. One by one her colonies were lost, but she kept her creed. She gave her gold to superstition, her brain to priests, but she faithfully counted her beads. Only a few days ago, relying on her God and his priests, on charms and amulets, on holy water and pieces of the true cross, she waged war against the great Republic. Bishops blessed her armies and sprinkled holy water on her ships, and yet her armies were de-

feated and captured, her ships battered, beached and burned, and in her helplessness she sued for peace. But she has her creed; her superstition is not lost. Poor Spain, wrecked by faith, the victim of religion!

Portugal, slowly dying, growing poorer every day, still clings to the faith. Her prayers are never answered, but she makes them still. Austria is nearly gone, a victim of superstition. Germany is traveling toward the night. God placed her Kaiser on the throne. The people must obey. Philosophers and scientists fall upon their knees and become the puppets of the divinely crowned.

## VII.

The believers in the supernatural, in a power superior to nature, in God, have what they call "inspired books." These books contain the absolute truth. They must be believed. He who denies them will be punished with eternal pain. These books are not addressed to human reason. They are above reason. They care nothing for what a man calls "facts." Facts that do not agree with these books are mistakes. These books are independent of human experience, of human reason.

Our inspired books constitute what we call the "Bible." The man who reads this inspired book, looking for contradictions, mistakes and interpolations, imperils the salvation of his soul. While he reads he has no right to think, no right to reason. To believe is his only duty.

Millions of men have wasted their lives in the study of this book—in trying to harmonize contradictions and to explain the obscure and seemingly absurd. In doing this they have justified nearly every crime and every cruelty. In its follies they have found the profoundest wisdom. Hundreds of creeds have been constructed from its inspired passages.

Probably no two of its readers have agreed as to its meaning. Thousands have studied Hebrew and Greek that they might read the Old and New Testament in the languages in which they were written. The more they studied, the more they differed. By the same book they proved that nearly everybody is to be lost, and that all are to be saved; that slavery is a divine institution, and that all men should be free; that polygamy is right, and that no man should have more than one wife; that the powers that be are ordained of God, and that the people have a right to overturn and destroy the powers that be; that all the actions of men were predestined—preordained from eternity, and yet that man is free; that all the heathen will be lost; that all the heathen will be saved; that all men who live according to the light of nature will be damned for their pains; that you must be baptized by sprinkling; that you must be baptized by immersion; that there is no salvation without baptism; that baptism is useless; that you must believe in the Trinity; that it is sufficient to believe in God; that you must believe that a Hebrew peasant was God; that at the same time he was half man, that he was of the blood of David through his supposed father Joseph, who was not his father, and that it is not necessary to believe that Christ was God; that you

must believe that the Holy Ghost proceeded; that it makes no difference whether you do or not; that you must keep the Sabbath holy; that Christ taught nothing of the kind; that Christ established a church; that he established no church; that the dead are to be raised; that there is to be no resurrection; that Christ is coming again; that he has made his last visit; that Christ went to hell and preached to the spirits in prison; that he did nothing of the kind; that all the Jews are going to perdition; that they are all going to heaven; that all the miracles described in the Bible were performed; that some of them were not, because they are foolish, childish and idiotic; that all the Bible is inspired; that some of the books are not inspired; that there is to be a general judgment, when the sheep and goats are to be divided; that there never will be any general judgment; that the sacramental bread and wine are changed into the flesh and blood of God and the Trinity; that they are not changed; that God has no flesh or blood; that there is a place called "purgatory;" that there is no such place; that unbaptized infants will be lost; that they will be saved; that we must believe the Apostles' Creed; that the apostles made no creed; that the Holy Ghost was the father of Christ; that Joseph was his father; that the Holy

Ghost had the form of a dove; that there is no Holy Ghost; that heretics should be killed; that you must not resist evil; that you should murder unbelievers; that you must love your enemies; that you should take no thought for the morrow, but should be diligent in business; that you should lend to all who ask, and that one who does not provide for his own household is worse than an infidel.

In defence of all these creeds, all these contradictions, thousands of volumes have been written, millions of sermons have been preached, countless swords reddened with blood, and thousands and thousands of nights made lurid with the faggot's flames.

Hundreds and hundreds of commentators have obscured and darkened the meaning of the plainest texts, spiritualized dates, names, numbers and even genealogies. They have degraded the poetic, changed parables to history, and imagery to stupid and impossible facts. They have wrestled with rhapsody and prophecy, with visions and dreams, with illusions and delusions, with myths and miracles, with the blunders of ignorance, the ravings of insanity and the ecstasy of hysterics. Millions of priests and preachers have added to the mysteries of the inspired book by explanation, by showing the wisdom of

foolishness, the foolishness of wisdom, the mercy of cruelty and the probability of the impossible.

The theologians made the Bible a master and the people its slaves. With this book they destroyed intellectual veracity, the natural manliness of man. With this book they banished pity from the heart, subverted all ideas of justice and fairness, imprisoned the soul in the dungeon of fear and made honest doubt a crime.

Think of what the world has suffered from fear. Think of the millions who were driven to insanity. Think of the fearful nights—nights filled with phantoms, with flying, crawling monsters, with hissing serpents that slowly uncoiled, with vague and formless horrors, with burning and malicious eyes.

Think of the fear of death, of infinite wrath, of everlasting revenge in the prisons of fire, of an eternity, of thirst, of endless regret, of the sobs and sighs, the shrieks and groans of eternal pain!

Think of the hearts hardened, of the hearts broken, of the cruelties inflicted, of the agonies endured, of the lives darkened.

The inspired Bible has been and is the greatest curse of Christendom, and will so remain as long as it is held to be inspired.

## VIII.

Our God was made by men, sculptured by savages who did the best they could. They made our God somewhat like themselves, and gave to him their passions, their ideas of right and wrong.

As man advanced he slowly changed his God—took a little ferocity from his heart, and put the light of kindness in his eyes. As man progressed he obtained a wider view, extended the intellectual horizon, and again he changed his God, making him as nearly perfect as he could, and yet this God was patterned after those who made him. As man became civilized, as he became merciful, he began to love justice, and as his mind expanded his ideal became purer, nobler, and so his God became more merciful, more loving.

In our day Jehovah has been outgrown. He is no longer the perfect. Now theologians talk, not about Jehovah, but about a God of love, call him the Eternal Father and the perpetual friend and providence of man. But, while they talk about this God of love, cyclones wreck and rend, the earthquake devours, the flood destroys, the red bolt leaping from the cloud still crashes the life out of men, and plague

and fever still are tireless reapers in the harvest fields of death.

They tell us now that all is good; that evil is but blessing in disguise, that pain makes strong and virtuous men—makes character—while pleasure enfeebles and degrades. If this be so, the souls in hell should grow to greatness, while those in heaven should shrink and shrivel.

But we know that good is good. We know that good is not evil, and that evil is not good. We know that light is not darkness, and that darkness is not light. But we do not feel that good and evil were planned and caused by a supernatural God. We regard them both as necessities. We neither thank nor curse. We know that some evil can be avoided and that the good can be increased. We know that this can be done by increasing knowledge, by developing the brain.

As Christians have changed their God, so they have accordingly changed their Bible. The impossible and absurd, the cruel and the infamous, have been mostly thrown aside, and thousands are now engaged in trying to save the inspired word. Of course, the orthodox still cling to every word, and still insist that every line is true. They are literalists. To them the Bible means exactly what it says.

They want no explanation. They care nothing for commentators. Contradictions cannot disturb their faith. They deny that any contradictions exist. They loyally stand by the sacred text, and they give it the narrowest possible interpretation. They are like the janitor of an apartment house who refused to rent a flat to a gentleman because he said he had children. "But," said the gentleman, "my children are both married and live in Iowa." "That makes no difference," said the janitor, "I am not allowed to rent a flat to any man who has children."

All the orthodox churches are obstructions on the highway of progress. Every orthodox creed is a chain, a dungeon. Every believer in the "inspired book" is a slave who drives reason from her throne, and in her stead crowns fear.

Reason is the light, the sun, of the brain. It is the compass of the mind, the ever-constant Northern Star, the mountain peak that lifts itself above all clouds.

## IX.

There were centuries of darkness when religion had control of Christendom. Superstition was almost universal. Not one in twenty thousand could read or write. During these centuries the people lived with their back to the sunrise, and pursued their way toward the dens of ignorance and faith. There was no progress, no invention, no discovery. On every hand cruelty and worship, persecution and prayer. The priests were the enemies of thought, of investigation. They were the shepherds, and the people were their sheep and it was their business to guard the flock from the wolves of thought and doubt. This world was of no importance compared with the next. This life was to be spent in preparing for the life to come. The gold and labor of men were wasted in building cathedrals and in supporting the pious and the useless. During these Dark Ages of Christianity, as I said before, nothing was invented, nothing was discovered, calculated to increase the well-being of men. The energies of Christendom were wasted in the vain effort to obtain assistance from the supernatural.

For centuries the business of Christians was to

wrest from the followers of Mohammed the empty sepulcher of Christ. Upon the altar of this folly millions of lives were sacrificed, and yet the soldiers of the impostor were victorious, and the wretches who carried the banner of Christ were scattered like leaves before the storm.

There was, I believe, one invention during these ages. It is said that, in the thirteenth century, Roger Bacon, a Franciscan monk, invented gunpowder, but this invention was without a fellow. Yet we cannot give Christianity the credit, because Bacon was an infidel, and was great enough to say that in all things reason must be the standard. He was persecuted and imprisoned, as most sensible men were in those blessed days. The church was triumphant. The sceptre and mitre were in her hands, and yet her success was the result of force and fraud, and it carried within itself the seeds of its defeat. The church attempted the impossible. It endeavored to make the world of one belief; to force all minds to a common form, and utterly destroy the individuality of man. To accomplish this it employed every art and artifice that cunning could suggest. It inflicted every cruelty by every means that malice could invent.

But, in spite of all, a few men began to think.

They became interested in the affairs of this world—in the great panorama of nature. They began to seek for causes, for the explanations of phenomena. They were not satisfied with the assertions of the church. These thinkers withdrew their gaze from the skies and looked at their own surroundings. They were unspiritual enough to desire comfort here. They became sensible and secular, worldly and wise.

What was the result? They began to invent, to discover, to find the relation between facts, the conditions of happiness and the means that would increase the well-being of their fellow-men.

Movable types were invented, paper was borrowed from the Moors, books appeared, and it became possible to save the intellectual wealth so that each generation could hand it to the next. History began to take the place of legend and rumor. The telescope was invented. The orbits of the stars were traced, and men became citizens of the universe. The steam engine was constructed, and now steam, the great slave, does the work of hundreds of millions of men. The Black Art, the impossible, was abandoned, and chemistry, the useful, took its place. Astrology became astronomy. Kepler discovered the three great laws, one of the greatest triumphs of human genius, and our constellation became a poem, a sym-

phony. Newton gave us the mathematical expression of the attraction of gravitation. Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood. He gave us the fact, and Draper gave us the reason. Steamships conquered the seas and railways covered the land. Houses and streets were lighted with gas. Through the invention of matches fire became the companion of man. The art of photography became known; the sun became an artist. Telegraphs and cables were invented. The lightning became a carrier of thought, and the nations became neighbors. Anæsthetics were discovered and pain was lost in sleep. Surgery became a science. The telephone was invented—the telephone that carries and deposits in listening ears the waves of words. The phonograph, that catches and retains in marks and dots and gives again the echoes of our speech.

Then came electric light that fills the night with day, and all the wonderful machines that use the subtle force—the same force that leaps from the summer cloud to ravage and destroy.

The Spectrum Analysis that tells us of the substance of the sun; the Röntgen rays that change the opaque to the transparent. The great thinkers demonstrated the indestructibility of force and matter—demonstrated that the indestructible could

not have been created. The geologist, in rocks and deposits and mountains and continents, read a little of the story of the world—of its changes, of the glacial epoch—the story of vegetable and animal life.

The biologists, through the fossil forms of life, established the antiquity of man and demonstrated the worthlessness of Holy Writ. Then came evolution, the survival of the fittest and natural selection. Thousands of mysteries were explained and science wrested the sceptre from superstition. The cell theory was advanced, and embryology was studied; the microscope discovered germs of disease and taught us how to stay the plague. These great theories and discoveries, together with countless inventions, are the children of intellectual liberty.

## X.

After all we know but little. In the darkness of life there are a few gleams of light. Possibly the dropping of a dishcloth prophesies the coming of company, but we have no evidence. Possibly it is dangerous for thirteen to dine together, but we have no evidence. Possibly a maiden's matrimonial chances are determined by the number of seeds in an apple, or by the number of leaves on a flower, but we have no evidence. Possibly certain stones give good luck to the wearer, while the wearing of others brings loss and death. Possibly a glimpse of the new moon over the left shoulder brings misfortune. Possibly there are curative virtues in old bones, in sacred rags and holy hairs, in images and bits of wood, in rusty nails and dried blood, but the trouble is we have no evidence. Possibly comets, eclipses and shooting stars foretell the death of kings, the destruction of nations or the coming of plague. Possibly devils take possession of the bodies and minds of men. Possibly witches, with the Devil's help, control the winds, breed storms on sea and land, fill summer's lap with frosts and snow, and work with charm and spell against the public

weal, but of this we have no evidence. It may be that all the miracles described in the Old and New Testament were performed; that the pallid flesh of the dead felt once more the thrill of life; that the corpse arose and felt upon his smiling lips the kiss of wife and child. Possibly water was turned into wine, loaves and fishes increased, and possibly devils were expelled from men and women; possibly fishes were found with money in their mouths; possibly clay and spittle brought back the light to sightless eyes, and possibly words cured disease and made the leper clean, but of this we have no evidence.

Possibly iron floated, rivers divided, waters burst from dry bones, birds carried food to prophets and angels flourished drawn swords, but of this we have no evidence.

Possibly Jehovah employed lying spirits to deceive a king, and all the wonders of the savage world may have happened, but the trouble is there is no proof.

So there may be a Devil, almost infinite in cunning and power, and he may have a countless number of imps whose only business is to sow the seeds of evil and to vex, mislead, capture and imprison in eternal flames the souls of men. All this, so far as we know, is possible. All we know is that we have no evidence except the assertions of ignorant priests.

Possibly there is a place called "hell," where all the devils live—a hell whose flames are waiting for all the men who think and have the courage to express their thoughts, for all who fail to credit priests and sacred books, for all who walk the path that reason lights, for all the good and brave who lack credulity and faith—but of this, I am happy to say, there is no proof.

And so there may be a place called "heaven," the home of God, where angels float and fly and play on harps and hear with joy the groans and shrieks of the lost in hell, but of this there is no evidence.

It all rests on dreams and visions of the insane.

There may be a power superior to nature, a power that governs and directs all things, but the existence of this power has not been established.

In the presence of the mysteries of life and thought, of force and substance, of growth and decay, of birth and death, of joy and pain, of the sufferings of the good, the triumphs of wrong, the intelligent honest man is compelled to say: "I do not know."

But we do know how gods and devils, heavens and hells, have been made. We know the history of inspired books—the origin of religions. We know how the seeds of superstition were planted and what made them grow. We know that all superstitions, all creeds, all follies and mistakes, all crimes and

cruelties, all virtues, vices, hopes and fears, all discoveries and inventions, have been naturally produced. By the light of reason we divide the useful from the hurtful, the false from the true.

We know the past—the paths that man has traveled—his mistakes, his triumphs. We know a few facts, a few fragments, and the imagination, the artist of the mind, with these facts, these fragments, rebuilds the past, and on the canvas of the future deftly paints the things to be.

We believe in the natural, in the unbroken and unbreakable succession of causes and effects. We deny the existence of the supernatural. We do not believe in any God who can be pleased with incense, with kneeling, with bell-ringing, psalm-singing, bead-counting, fasting or prayer—in any God who can be flattered by words of faith or fear.

We believe in the natural. We have no fear of devils, ghosts or hells. We believe that Mahatmas, astral bodies, materializations of spirits, crystal gazing, seeing the future, telepathy, mind reading and Christian Science are only cunning frauds, the genuineness of which is established by the testimony of incompetent, honest witnesses. We believe that Cunning plates fraud with the gold of honesty, and veneers vice with virtue.

We know that millions are seeking the impossible —trying to secure the aid of the supernatural—to solve the problem of life—to guess the riddle of destiny, and to pluck from the future its secret. We know that all their efforts are in vain.

We believe in the natural. We believe in home and fireside—in wife and child and friend—in the realities of this world. We have faith in facts—in knowledge—in the development of the brain. We throw away superstition and welcome science. We banish the phantoms, the mistakes and lies and cling to the truth. We do not enthrone the unknown and crown our ignorance. We do not stand with our backs to the sun and mistake our shadow for God.

We do not create a master and thankfully wear his chains. We do not enslave ourselves. We want no leaders—no followers. Our desire is that every human being shall be true to himself, to his ideal, unbribed by promises, careless of threats. We want no tyrant on the earth or in the air.

We know that superstition has given us delusions and illusions, dreams and visions, ceremonies and cruelties, faith and fanaticism, beggars and bigots, persecutions and prayers, theology and torture, piety and poverty, saints and slaves, miracles and mummeries, disease and death.

We know that science has given us all we have of value. Science is the only civilizer. It has freed the slave, clothed the naked, fed the hungry, lengthened life, given us homes and hearths, pictures and books, ships and railways, telegraphs and cables, engines that tirelessly turn the countless wheels, and it has destroyed the monsters, the phantoms, the winged horrors that filled the savage brain.

Science is the real redeemer. It will put honesty above hypocrisy; mental veracity above all belief. It will teach the religion of usefulness. It will destroy bigotry in all its forms. It will put thoughtful doubt above thoughtless faith. It will give us philosophers, thinkers and savants, instead of priests, theologians and saints. It will abolish poverty and crime, and greater, grander, nobler than all else, it will make the whole world free.

# THE DEVIL.

# THE DEVIL.

## IF THE DEVIL SHOULD DIE WOULD GOD MAKE ANOTHER?

A little while ago I delivered a lecture on "Superstition," in which, among other things, I said that the Christian world could not deny the existence of the Devil; that the Devil was really the keystone of the arch, and that to take him away was to destroy the entire system.

A great many clergymen answered or criticised this statement. Some of these ministers avowed their belief in the existence of his Satanic Majesty, while others actually denied his existence; but some, without stating their own position, said that others believed, not in the existence of a personal devil, but in the personification of evil, and that all references to the Devil in the Scriptures could be explained on the hypothesis that the Devil thus alluded to was simply a personification of evil.

When I read these answers I thought of this line from Heine: "Christ rode on an ass, but now asses ride on Christ."

Now, the questions are, first, whether the Devil does really exist; second, whether the sacred Scriptures teach the existence of the Devil and of unclean spirits, and third, whether this belief in devils is a necessary part of what is known as "orthodox Christianity."

Now, where did the idea that a Devil exists come from? How was it produced?

Fear is an artist—a sculptor—a painter. All tribes and nations, having suffered, having been the sport and prey of natural phenomena, having been struck by lightning, poisoned by weeds, overwhelmed by volcanoes, destroyed by earthquakes, believed in the existence of a Devil, who was the king—the ruler—of innumerable smaller devils, and all these devils have been from time immemorial regarded as the enemies of men.

Along the banks of the Ganges wandered the Asuras, the most powerful of evil spirits. Their business was to war against the Devas—that is to

say, the gods—and at the same time against human beings. There, too, were the ogres, the Jakshas and many others who killed and devoured human beings.

The Persians turned this around, and with them the Asuras were good and the Devas bad. Ormuzd was the good—the god—Ahriman the evil—the devil—and between the god and the devil was waged a perpetual war. Some of the Persians thought that the evil would finally triumph, but others insisted that the good would be the victor.

In Egypt the devil was Set—or, as usually called, Typhon—and the good god was Osiris. Set and his legions fought against Osiris and against the human race.

Among the Greeks, the Titans were the enemies of the gods. Ate was the spirit that tempted, and such was her power that at one time she tempted and misled the god of gods, even Zeus himself.

These ideas about gods and devils often changed, because in the days of Socrates a demon was not a devil, but a guardian angel.

We obtain our Devil from the Jews, and they got him from Babylon. The Jews cultivated the science

of Demonology, and at one time it was believed that there were nine kinds of demons: Beelzebub, prince of the false gods of the other nations; the Pythian Apollo, prince of liars; Belial, prince of mischief-makers; Asmodeus, prince of revengeful devils; Satan, prince of witches and magicians; Meresin, prince of aerial devils, who caused thunderstorms and plagues; Abaddon, who caused wars, tumults and combustions; Diabolus, who drives to despair, and Mammon, prince of the tempters.

It was believed that demons and sorcerers frequently came together and held what were called "Sabbats;" that is to say, orgies. It was also known that sorcerers and witches had marks on their bodies that had been imprinted by the Devil.

Of course these devils were all made by the people, and in these devils we find the prejudices of their makers. The Europeans always represent their devils as black, while the Africans believed that theirs were white.

So, it was believed that people by the aid of the Devil could assume any shape that they wished. Witches and wizards were changed into wolves, dogs,

cats and serpents. This change to animal form was exceedingly common.

Within two years, between 1598 and 1600, in one district of France, the district of Jura, more than six hundred men and women were tried and convicted before one judge of having changed themselves into wolves, and all were put to death.

This is only one instance. There are thousands.

There is no time to give the history of this belief in devils. It has been universal. The consequences have been terrible beyond the imagination. Millions and millions of men, women and children, of fathers and mothers, have been sacrificed upon the altar of this ignorant and idiotic belief.

Of course, the Christians of to-day do not believe that the devils of the Hindus, Egyptians, Persians or Babylonians existed. They think that those nations created their own devils, precisely the same as they did their own gods. But the Christians of to-day admit that for many centuries Christians did believe in the existence of countless devils; that the Fathers of the church believed as sincerely in the Devil and

his demons as in God and his angels; that they were just as sure about hell as heaven.

I admit that people did the best they could to account for what they saw, for what they experienced. I admit that the devils as well as the gods were naturally produced—the effect of nature upon the human brain. The cause of phenomena filled our ancestors not only with wonder, but with terror. The miraculous, the supernatural, was not only believed in, but was always expected.

A man walking in the woods at night—just a glimmering of the moon—everything uncertain and shadowy—sees a monstrous form. One arm is raised. His blood grows cold, his hair lifts. In the gloom he sees the eyes of an ogre—eyes that flame with malice. He feels that the something is approaching. He turns, and with a cry of horror takes to his heels. He is afraid to look back. Spent, out of breath, shaking with fear, he reaches his hut and falls at the door. When he regains consciousnes, he tells his story and, of course, the children believe. When they become men and women they tell father's story of having seen the Devil to their children, and so the children

and grandchildren not only believe, but think they know, that their father—their grandfather—actually saw a devil.

An old woman sitting by the fire at night—a storm raging without—hears the mournful sough of the wind. To her it becomes a voice. Her imagination is touched, and the voice seems to utter words. Out of these words she constructs a message or a warning from the unseen world. If the words are good, she has heard an angel; if they are threatening and malicious, she has heard a devil. She tells this to her children and they believe. They say that mother's religion is good enough for them. A girl suffering from hysteria falls into a trance—has visions of the infernal world. The priest sprinkles holy water on her pallid face, saying: "She hath a devil." A man utters a terrible cry; falls to the ground; foam and blood issue from his mouth; his limbs are convulsed. The spectators say: "This is the Devil's work."

Through all the ages people have mistaken dreams and visions of fear for realities. To them the insane were inspired; epileptics were possessed by devils;

apoplexy was the work of an unclean spirit. For many centuries people believed that they had actually seen the malicious phantoms of the night, and so thorough was this belief—so vivid—that they made pictures of them. They knew how they looked. They drew and chiseled their hoofs, their horns—all their malicious deformities.

Now, I admit that all these monsters were naturally produced. The people believed that hell was their native land; that the Devil was a king, and that he and his imps waged war against the children of men. Curiously enough some of these devils were made out of degraded gods, and, naturally enough, many devils were made out of the gods of other nations. So that frequently the gods of one people were the devils of another.

In nature there are opposing forces. Some of the forces work for what man calls good; some for what he calls evil. Back of these forces our ancestors put will, intelligence and design. They could not believe that the good and evil came from the same being. So back of the good they put God; back of the evil, the Devil.

## II.

### THE ATLAS OF CHRISTIANITY IS THE DEVIL.

The religion known as "Christianity" was invented by God himself to repair in part the wreck and ruin that had resulted from the Devil's work.

Take the Devil from the scheme of salvation—from the atonement—from the dogma of eternal pain—and the foundation is gone.

The Devil is the keystone of the arch.

He inflicted the wounds that Christ came to heal. He corrupted the human race.

The question now is: Does the Old Testament teach the existence of the Devil?

If the Old Testament teaches anything, it does teach the existence of the Devil, of Satan, of the Serpent, of the enemy of God and man, the deceiver of men and women.

Those who believe the Scriptures are compelled to say that this Devil was created by God, and that God knew when he created him just what he would do—

the exact measure of his success; knew that he would be a successful rival; knew that he would deceive and corrupt the children of men; knew that, by reason of this Devil, countless millions of human beings would suffer eternal torment in the prison of pain. And this God also knew when he created the Devil, that he, God, would be compelled to leave his throne, to be born a babe in Palestine, and to suffer a cruel death. All this he knew when he created the Devil. Why did he create him?

It is no answer to say that this Devil was once an angel of light and fell from his high estate because he was free. God knew what he would do with his freedom when he made him and gave him liberty of action, and as a matter of fact must have made him with the intention that he should rebel; that he should fall; that he should become a devil; that he should tempt and corrupt the father and mother of the human race; that he should make hell a necessity, and that, in consequence of his creation, countless millions of the children of men would suffer eternal pain. Why did he create him?

Admit that God is infinitely wise. Has he inge-

nuity enough to frame an excuse for the creation of the Devil?

Does the Old Testament teach the existence of a real, living Devil?

The first account of this being is found in Genesis, and in that account he is called the "Serpent." He is declared to have been more subtle than any beast of the field. According to the account, this Serpent had a conversation with Eve, the first woman. We are not told in what language they conversed, or how they understood each other, as this was the first time they had met. Where did Eve get her language? Where did the Serpent get his? Of course, such questions are impudent, but at the same time they are natural.

The result of this conversation was that Eve ate the forbidden fruit and induced Adam to do the same. This is what is called the "Fall," and for this they were expelled from the Garden of Eden.

On account of this, God cursed the earth with weeds and thorns and brambles, cursed man with toil, made woman a slave, and cursed maternity with pain and sorrow.

How men—good men—can worship this God; how women—good women—can love this Jehovah, is beyond my imagination.

In addition to the other curses the Serpent was cursed—condemned to crawl on his belly and to eat dust. We do not know by what means, before that time, he moved from place to place—whether he walked or flew; neither do we know on what food he lived; all we know is that after that time he crawled and lived on dust. Jehovah told him that this he should do all the days of his life. It would seem from this that the Serpent was not at that time immortal—that there was somewhere in the future a milepost at which the life of this Serpent stopped. Whether he is living yet or not, I am not certain.

It will not do to say that this is allegory, or a poem, because this proves too much. If the Serpent did not in fact exist, how do we know that Adam and Eve existed? Is all that is said about God allegory, and poetic, or mythical? Is the whole account, after all, an ignorant dream?

Neither will it do to say that the Devil—the Serpent—was a personification of evil. Do personifica

tions of evil talk? Can a personification of evil crawl on its belly? Can a personification of evil eat dust? If we say that the Devil was a personification of evil, are we not at the same time compelled to say that Jehovah was a personification of good; that the Garden of Eden was the personification of a place, and that the whole story is a personification of something that did not happen? Maybe that Adam and Eve were not driven out of the Garden; they may have suffered only the personification of exile. And maybe the cherubim placed at the gate of Eden, with flaming swords, were only personifications of policemen.

There is no escape. If the Old Testament is true, the Devil does exist, and it is impossible to explain him away without at the same time explaining God away.

So there are many references to devils, and spirits of divination and of evil which I have not the time to call attention to; but, in the Book of Job, Satan, the Devil has a conversation with God. It is this Devil that brings the sorrows and losses on the upright man. It is this Devil that raises the storm that

wrecks the homes of Job's children. It is this Devil that kills the children of Job. Take this Devil from that book, and all meaning, plot and purpose fade away.

Is it possible to say that the Devil in Job was only a personification of evil?

In Chronicles we are told that Satan provoked David to number Israel. For this act of David, caused by the Devil, God did not smite the Devil, did not punish David, but he killed 70,000 poor innocent Jews who had done nothing but stand up and be counted.

Was this Devil who tempted David a personification of evil, or was Jehovah a personification of the devilish?

In Zachariah we are told that Joshua stood before the angel of the Lord, and that Satan stood at his right hand to resist him, and that the Lord rebuked Satan.

If words convey any meaning, the Old Testament teaches the existence of the Devil.

All the passages about witches and those having familiar spirits were born of a belief in the Devil.

When a man who loved Jehovah wanted revenge on his enemy he fell on his holy knees, and from a heart full of religion he cried: "Let Satan stand at his right hand."

## III.

### TAKE THE DEVIL FROM THE DRAMA OF CHRISTIANITY AND THE PLOT IS GONE.

The next question is: Does the New Testament teach the existence of the Devil?

As a matter of fact, the New Testament is far more explicit than the Old. The Jews, believing that Jehovah was God, had very little business for a devil. Jehovah was wicked enough and malicious enough to take the Devil's place.

The first reference in the New Testament to the Devil is in the fourth chapter of Matthew. We are told that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil.

It seems that he was not led by the Devil into the wilderness, but by the Spirit; that the Spirit and the Devil were acting together in a kind of pious conspiracy.

In the wilderness Jesus fasted forty days, and then the Devil asked him to turn stones into bread. The Devil also took him to Jerusalem and set him on a

pinnacle of the temple, and tried to induce him to leap to the earth. The Devil also took him to the top of a mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and offered them all to him in exchange for his worship. Jesus refused. The Devil went away and angels came and ministered to Christ.

Now, the question is: Did the author of this account believe in the existence of the Devil, or did he regard this Devil as a personification of evil, and did he intend that his account should be understood as an allegory, or as a poem, or as a myth.

Was Jesus tempted? If he was tempted, who tempted him? Did anybody offer him the kingdoms of the world?

Did the writer of the account try to convey to the reader the thought that Christ was tempted by the Devil?

If Christ was not tempted by the Devil, then the temptation was born in his own heart. If that be true, can it be said that he was divine? If these adders, these vipers, were coiled in his bosom, was he the son of God? Was he pure?

In the same chapter we are told that Christ healed

"those which were possessed of devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy."

From this it is evident that a distinction was made between those possessed with devils and those whose minds were affected and those who were afflicted with diseases.

In the eighth chapter we are told that people brought unto Christ many that were possessed with devils, and that he cast out the spirits with his word. Now, can we say that these people were possessed with personifications of evil, and that these personifications of evil were cast out? Are these personifications entities? Have they form and shape? Do they occupy space?

Then comes the story of the two men possessed with devils who came from the tombs, and were exceeding fierce. It is said that when they saw Jesus they cried out: "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"

If these were simply personifications of evil, how did they know that Jesus was the Son of God, and how can a personification of evil be tormented?

We are told that at the same time, a good way off, many swine were feeding, and that the devils besought Christ, saying: "If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine." And he said unto them: "Go."

Is it possible that personifications of evil would desire to enter the bodies of swine, and is it possible that it was necessary for them to have the consent of Christ before they could enter the swine? The question naturally arises: How did they enter into the body of the man? Did they do that without Christ's consent, and is it a fact that Christ protects swine and neglects human beings? Can personifications have desires?

In the ninth chapter of Matthew there was a dumb man brought to Jesus, possessed with a devil. Jesus cast out the devil and the dumb man spake.

Did a personification of evil prevent the dumb man from talking? Did it in some way paralyze his organs of speech? Could it have done this had it only been a personification of evil?

In the tenth chapter Jesus gives his twelve disciples power to cast out unclean spirits. What were

unclean spirits supposed to be? Did they really exist? Were they shadows, impersonations, allegories?

When Jesus sent his disciples forth on the great mission to convert the world, among other things he told them to heal the sick, to raise the dead and to cast out devils. Here a distinction is made between the sick and those who were possessed by evil spirits.

Now, what did Christ mean by devils?

In the twelfth chapter we are told of a very remarkable case. There was brought unto Jesus one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb, and Jesus healed him. The blind and dumb both spake and saw. Thereupon the Pharisees said: "This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils."

Jesus answered by saying: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation. If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself."

Why did not Christ tell the Pharisees that he did not cast out devils—only personifications of evil; and that with these personifications Beelzebub had nothing to do?

Another question: Did the Pharisees believe in the

existence of devils, or had they the personification idea?

At the same time Christ said: "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you."

If he meant anything by these words he certainly intended to convey the idea that what he did demonstrated the superiority of God over the Devil.

Did Christ believe in the existence of the Devil?

In the fifteenth chapter is the account of the woman of Canaan who cried unto Jesus, saying: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David. My daughter is sorely vexed with a devil." On account of her faith Christ made the daughter whole.

In the sixteenth chapter a man brought his son to Jesus. The boy was a lunatic, sore vexed, oftentimes falling in the fire and water. The disciples had tried to cure him and had failed. Jesus rebuked the devil, and the devil departed out of him and the boy was cured. Was the devil in this case a personification of evil?

The disciples then asked Jesus why they could not cast that devil out. Jesus told them that it was

because of their unbelief, and then added: "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." From this it would seem that some personifications were easier to expel than others.

The first chapter of Mark throws a little light on the story of the temptation of Christ. Matthew tells us that Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. In Mark we are told who this Spirit was:

"And straightway coming up out of the water he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him.

"And there came a voice from heaven, saying: 'Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'

"And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness."

Why the Holy Ghost should hand Christ over to the tender mercies of the Devil is not explained. And it is all the more wonderful when we remember that the Holy Ghost was the third person in the Trinity and Christ the second, and that this Holy Ghost was, in fact, God, and that Christ also was, in

fact, God, so that God led God into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil.

We are told that Christ was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan, and was with the wild beasts, and that the angels ministered unto him.

Were these angels real angels, or were they personifications of good, of comfort?

So we see that the same Spirit that came out of heaven, the same Spirit that said "This is my beloved son," drove Christ into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan.

Was this Devil a real being? Was this Spirit who claimed to be the father of Christ a real being, or was he a personification? Are the heavens a real place? Are they a personification? Did the wild beasts live and did the angels minister unto Christ? In other words, is the story true, or is it poetry, or metaphor, or mistake, or falsehood?

It might be asked: Why did God wish to be tempted by the Devil? Was God ambitious to obtain a victory over Satan? Was Satan foolish enough to think that he could mislead God, and is it possible that the Devil offered to give the world as a bribe to its creator

and owner, knowing at the same time that Christ was the creator and owner, and also knowing that he (Christ) knew that he (the Devil) knew that he (Christ) was the creator and owner?

Is not the whole story absurdly idiotic? The Devil knew that Christ was God, and knew that Christ knew that the tempter was the Devil.

It may be asked how I know that the Devil knew that Christ was God. My answer is found in the same chapter. There is an account of what a devil said to Christ:

"Let us alone. What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee. Thou art the holy one of God."

Certainly, if the little devils knew this, the Devil himself must have had like information. Jesus rebuked this devil and said to him: "Hold thy peace, and come out of him." And when the unclean spirit had torn him and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

So we are told that Jesus cast out many devils, and suffered not the devils to speak because they knew him.

So it is said in the third chapter that "unclean

spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him and cried, saying, 'Thou art the son of God.'"

In the fifth chapter is an account of casting out the devils that went into the swine, and we are told that "all the devils besought him saying, 'Send us into the swine.' And Jesus gave them leave."

Again I ask: Was it necessary for the devils to get the permission of Christ before they could enter swine? Again I ask: By whose permission did they enter into the man?

Could personifications of evil enter a herd of swine, or could personifications of evil make a bargain with Christ?

In the sixth chapter we are told that the disciples "cast out many devils and anointed with oil many that were sick." Here again the distinction is made between those possessed by devils and those afflicted by disease. It will not do to say that the devils were diseases or personifications.

In the seventh chapter a Greek woman whose daughter was possessed by a devil besought Christ to cast this devil out. At last Christ said: "The devil is gone out of thy daughter."

In the ninth chapter one of the multitude said unto Christ: "I have brought unto thee my son which hath a dumb spirit. I spoke unto thy disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not."

So they brought this boy before Christ, and when the boy saw him, the spirit tare him, and he fell on the ground and "wallowed, foaming."

Christ asked the father: "How long is it ago since this came unto him?" And he answered: "Of a child, and ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire and into the waters to destroy him."

Then Christ said: "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him."

"And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him; and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, 'He is dead.'"

Then the disciples asked Jesus why they could not cast them out, and Jesus said: "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting."

Is there any doubt about the belief of the man who wrote this account? Is there any allegory, or poetry, or myth in this story? The devil, in this case, was

not an ordinary, every-day devil. He was dumb and deaf; it was no use to order him out, because he could not hear. The only way was to pray and fast.

Is there such a thing as a dumb and deaf devil? If so, the devils must be organized. They must have ears and organs of speech, and they must be dumb because there is something the matter with the apparatus of speaking, and they must be deaf because something is the matter with their ears. It would seem from this that they are not simply spiritual beings, but organized on a physical basis. Now, we know that the ears do not hear. It is the brain that hears. So these devils must have brains; that is to say, they must have been what we call "organized beings."

Now, it is hardly possible that personifications of evil are dumb or deaf. That is to say, that they have physical imperfections.

In the same chapter John tells Christ that he saw one casting out devils in Christ's name who did not follow with them, and Jesus said: "Forbid him not." By this he seemed to admit that some one, not a follower of his, was casting out devils in his name,

and he was willing that he should go on, because, as he said: "For there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me."

In the fourth chapter of Luke the story of the temptation of Christ by the Devil is again told with a few additions. All the writers, having been inspired, did not remember exactly the same things.

Luke tells us that the Devil said unto Christ, having shown him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time: "All this power will I give thee and the glory of them, for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou wilt worship me, all shall be thine."

We are also told that when the Devil had ended all the temptation he departed from him for a season. The date of his return is not given.

In the same chapter we are told that a man in the synagogue had a "spirit of an unclean devil." This devil recognized Jesus and admitted that he was the Holy One of God.

As a matter of fact, the apostles seemed to have relied upon the evidence of devils to substantiate the divinity of their Lord.

Jesus said to this devil: "Hold thy peace and come out of him." And the devil, after throwing the man down, came out.

In the forty-first verse of the same chapter it is said: "And devils also came out of many, crying out and saying, 'Thou art Christ, the Son of God.'"

It is also said that Christ rebuked them and suffered them not to speak, for they knew that he was Christ.

Now, it will not do to say that these devils were diseases, because diseases could not talk, and diseases would not recognize Christ as the Son of God. After all, epilepsy is not a theologian. I admit that lunacy comes nearer.

In the eighth chapter is told again the story of the devils and the swine. In this account, Jesus asked the devil his name, and the devil replied "Legion."

In the ninth chapter is told the story of the devil that the disciples could not cast out, but was cast out by Christ, and in the thirteenth chapter it is said that the Pharisees came to Jesus, telling him to go away, because Herod would kill him, and Jesus said unto these Pharisees; "Go ye, and tell that fox, behold, I cast out devils."

What did he mean by this? Did he mean that he cured diseases? No. Because in the same sentence he says, "And I do cures to-day," making a distinction between devils and diseases.

In the twenty-second chapter an account of the betrayal of Christ by Judas is given in these words:

"Then entered Satan into Judas Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve."

"And he went his way and communed with the chief priests and captains how he might betray him unto them.

"And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money."

According to Christ the little devils knew that he was the Son of God. Certainly, then, Satan, king of all the fiends, knew that Christ was divine. And he not only knew that, but he knew all about the scheme of salvation. He knew that Christ wished to make an atonement of blood by the sacrifice of himself.

According to Christian theologians, the Devil has always done his utmost to gain possession of the souls of men. At the time he entered into Judas,

persuading him to betray Christ, he knew that if Christ was betrayed he would be crucified, and that he would make an atonement for all believers, and that, as a result, he, the Devil, would lose all the souls that Christ gained.

What interest had the Devil in defeating himself? If he could have prevented the betrayal, then Christ would not have been crucified. No atonement would have been made, and the whole world would have gone to hell. The success of the Devil would have been complete. But, according to this story, the Devil outwitted himself.

How thankful we should be to his Satanic Majesty. He opened for us the gates of Paradise and made it possible for us to obtain eternal life. Without Satan, without Judas, not a single human being could have become an angel of light. All would have been wingless devils in the prison of flame. In Jerusalem, to the extent of his power, Satan repaired the wreck and ruin he had wrought in the Garden of Eden.

Certainly the writers of the New Testament believed in the existence of the Devil.

In the eighth chapter it is said that out of Mary

Magdalene were cast seven devils. To me Mary Magdalene is the most beautiful character in the New Testament. She is the one true disciple. In the darkness of the crucifixion she lingered near. She was the first at the sepulcher. Defeat, disaster, disgrace, could not conquer her love. And yet, according to the account, when she met the risen Christ, he said: "Touch me not." This was the reward of her infinite devotion.

In the Gospel of John we are told that John the Baptist said that he saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and that it abode upon Christ. But in the Gospel of John nothing is said about the Spirit driving Christ into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. Possibly John never heard of that, or forgot it, or did not believe it. But in the thirteenth chapter I find this:

"And supper being ended, the Devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him." * * *

In John there are no accounts of the casting out of devils by Christ or his apostles. On that subject there is no word. Possibly John had his doubts.

In the fifth chapter of Acts we are told that the people brought the sick and those which were vexed with unclean spirits to the apostles, and the apostles healed them. Here again there is made a clear distinction between the sick and those possessed by devils. And in the eighth chapter we are told that "unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of them."

In the thirteen chapter Paul calls Elymas the child of the Devil, and in the sixteenth chapter an account is given of "a damsel possessed with a spirit of divination, who brought her masters much gain by soothsaying."

Paul and Silas, it would seem, cast out this spirit, and by reason of that suffered great persecution.

In the nineteenth chapter certain vagabond Jews pronounced over those who had evil spirits the name of Jesus, and the evil spirits answered: "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?"

"And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them so that they fled naked and wounded."

Paul, writing to the Corinthians, in the eighth chapter says:

"I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils. Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?"

In the eleventh chapter he says that long hair is the glory of woman, but that she ought to keep her head covered because of the angels.

In those intellectual days people believed in what were called the Incubi and the Succubi. The Incubi were male angels and the Succubi were female angels, and according to the belief of that time nothing so attracted the Incubi as the beautiful hair of women, and for this reason Paul said that women should keep their heads covered. Paul calls the Devil the "prince of the power of the air."

So in Jude we are told "that Michael, the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, 'The Lord rebuke thee.'"

Was this devil with whom Michael contended a personification of evil, or a poem, or a myth?

In First Peter we are told to be sober, vigilant,

"because your adversary, the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

Are people devoured by personifications or myths? Has an allegory an appetite, or is a poem a cannibal?

So in Ephesians we are warned not to give place to the Devil, and in the same book we are told: "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil."

And in Hebrews it is said that "him that had the power of death—that is, the Devil;" showing that the Devil has the power of death.

And in James it is said that if we resist the Devil he will flee from us; and in First John we are told that he that committeth sin is of the Devil, for the reason that the Devil sinneth from the beginning; and we are also told that "for this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he may destroy the works of the Devil."

No Devil—no Christ.

In Revelation, the insanest of all books, I find the following: "And there was war in heaven. Michael

and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels.

"And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

"Therefore, rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea; for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

From this it would appear that the Devil once lived in heaven, raised a rebellion, was defeated and cast out, and the inspired writer congratulates the angels that they are rid of him and commiserates us that we have him.

In the twentieth chapter of Revelation is the following:

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

"And he laid hold on the dragon—that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan—and bound him a thousand years.

"And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after he must be loosed a little season."

It is hard to understand how one could be confined in a pit without a bottom, and how a chain of iron could hold one in eternal fire, or what use there would be to lock a bottomless pit; but these are questions probably suggested by the Devil.

We are further told that "when the thousand years are expired Satan shall be loosed out of his prison."

"And the Devil was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever."

In the light of the passages that I have read we can clearly see what the writers of the New Testament believed. About this there can be no honest difference. If the gospels teach the existence of God

—of Christ—they teach the existence of the Devil. If the Devil does not exist—if little devils do not enter the bodies of men—the New Testament may be inspired, but it is not true.

The early Christians proved that Christ was divine because he cast out devils. The evidence they offered was more absurd than the statement they sought to prove. They were like the old man who said that he saw a grindstone floating down the river. Some one said that a grindstone would not float. "Ah," said the old man, "but the one I saw had an iron crank in it."

Of course, I do not blame the authors of the gospels. They lived in a superstitious age, at a time when Rumor was the historian, when Gossip corrected the "proof," and when everything was believed except the facts.

The apostles, like their fellows, believed in miracles and magic. Credulity was regarded as a virtue.

The Rev. Mr. Parkhurst denounces the apostles as worthless cravens. Certainly I do not agree with him. I think that they were good men. I do not believe that any one of them ever tried to reform

Jerusalem on the Parkhurst plan. I admit that they honestly believed in devils—that they were credulous and superstitious.

There is one story in the New Testament that illustrates my meaning.

In the fifth chapter of John is the following:

"Now, there is at Jerusalem, by the sheep market, a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue 'Bethesda,' having five porches.

"In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk—of blind, halt, withered—waiting for the moving of the water.

"For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

"And a certain man was there which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

"When Jesus saw him lie and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him: 'Wilt thou be made whole?'

"The impotent man answered him: 'Sir, I have no man when the water is troubled to put me into the

pool; but while I am coming another steppeth down before me.'

"Jesus saith unto him: 'Rise, take up thy bed and walk.'

"And immediately the man was made whole and took up his bed and walked."

Does any sensible human being now believe this story? Was the water of Bethesda troubled by an angel? Where did the angel come from? Where do angels live? Did the angel put medicine in the water—just enough to cure one? Did he put in different medicines for different diseases, or did he have a medicine, like those that are patented now, that cured all diseases just the same?

Was the water troubled by an angel? Possibly, what apostles and theologians call an angel a scientist knows as carbonic acid gas.

John does not say that the people thought the water was troubled by an angel, but he states it as a fact. And he tells us, also, as a fact, that the first invalid that got in the water after it had been troubled was cured of what disease he had.

What is the evidence of John worth?

Again I say that if the Devil does not exist the gospels are not inspired. If devils do not exist Christ was either honestly mistaken, insane or an impostor.

If devils do not exist the fall of man is a mistake and the atonement an absurdity. If devils do not exist hell becomes only a dream of revenge.

Beneath the structure called "Christianity" are four corner-stones—the Father, Son, Holy Ghost and Devil.

## IV.

### THE EVIDENCE OF THE CHURCH.

THE DEVIL WAS FORCED TO FATHER THE FAILURES OF GOD.

All the fathers of the church believed in devils. All the saints won their crowns by overcoming devils. All the popes and cardinals, bishops and priests, believed in devils. Most of their time was occupied in fighting devils. The whole Catholic world, from the lowest layman to the highest priest, believed in devils. They proved the existence of devils by the New Testament. They knew that these devils were citizens of hell. They knew that Satan was their king. They knew that hell was made for the Devil and his angels.

The founders of all the Protestant churches—the makers of all the orthodox creeds—all the leading Protestant theologians, from Luther to the president of Princeton College—were, and are, firm believers in the Devil. All the great commentators believed in the Devil as firmly as they did in God.

Under the "Scheme of Salvation" the Devil was a necessity. Somebody had to be responsible for the thorns and thistles, for the cruelties and crimes. Somebody had to father the mistakes of God. The Devil was the scapegoat of Jehovah.

For hundreds of years, good, honest, zealous Christians contended against the Devil. They fought him day and night, and the thought that they had beaten him gave to their dying lips the smile of victory.

For centuries the church taught that the natural man was totally depraved; that he was by nature a child of the Devil, and that new-born babes were tenanted by unclean spirits.

As late as the middle of the sixteenth century, every infant that was baptized was, by that ceremony, freed from a devil. When the holy water was applied the priest said: "I command thee, thou unclean spirit, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that thou come out and depart from this infant, whom our Lord Jesus Christ has vouchsafed to call to his holy baptism, to be made a member of his body, and of his holy congregation."

At that time the fathers—the theologians, the commentators—agreed that unbaptized children, including those that were born dead, went to hell.

And these same fathers—theologians and commentators—said: "God is love."

These babes were pure as Pity's tears, innocent as their mother's loving smiles, and yet the makers of our creeds believed and taught that leering, unclean fiends inhabited their dimpled flesh. O, the unsearchable riches of Christianity!

For many centuries the church filled the world with devils—with malicious spirits that caused storm and tempest, disease, accident and death—that filled the night with visions of despair; with prophecies that drove the dreamers mad. These devils assumed a thousand forms—countless disguises in their efforts to capture souls and destroy the church. They deceived sometimes the wisest and the best; made priests forget their vows. They melted virtue's snow in passion's fire, and in cunning ways entrapped and smirched the innocent and good. These devils gave witches and wizards their supernatural powers, and told them the secrets of the future.

Millions of men and women were destroyed because they had sold themselves to the Devil.

At that time Christians really believed the New Testament. They knew it was the inspired word of God, and so believing, so knowing—as they thought—they became insane.

No man has genius enough to describe the agonies that have been inflicted on innocent men and women because of this absurd belief. How it darkened the mind, hardened the heart, and poisoned life! It made the Universe a madhouse presided over by an insane God.

Think! Why would a merciful God allow his children to be the victims of devils? Why would a decent God allow his worshipers to believe in devils, and by reason of that belief to persecute, torture and burn their fellow-men?

Christians did not ask these questions. They believed the Bible; they had confidence in the words of Christ.

## V.

### PERSONIFICATIONS OF EVIL.

### THE ORTHODOX OSTRICH THRUSTS HIS HEAD INTO THE SAND.

Many of the clergy are now ashamed to say that they believe in devils. The belief has become ignorant and vulgar. They are ashamed of the lake of fire and brimstone. It is too savage.

At the same time they do not wish to give up the inspiration of the Bible. They give new meanings to the inspired words. Now they say that devils were only personifications of evil.

If the devils were only personifications of evil, what were the angels? Was the angel who told Joseph who the father of Christ was, a personification? Was the Holy Ghost only the personification of a father? Was the angel who told Joseph that Herod was dead a personification of news?

Were the angels who rolled away the stone and sat clothed in shining garments in the empty sepulcher of Christ a couple of personifications? Were all the

angels described in the Old Testament imaginary shadows—bodiless personifications? If the angels of the Bible are real angels, the devils are real devils.

Let us be honest with ourselves and each other and give to the Bible its natural, obvious meaning. Let us admit that the writers believed what they wrote. If we believe that they were mistaken, let us have the honesty and courage to say so. Certainly we have no right to change or avoid their meaning, or to dishonestly correct their mistakes. Timid preachers sully their own souls when they change what the writers of the Bible believed to be facts to allegories, parables, poems and myths.

It is impossible for any man who believes in the inspiration of the Bible to explain away the Devil.

If the Bible is true the Devil exists. There is no escape from this.

If the Devil does not exist the Bible is not true. There is no escape from this.

I admit that the Devil of the Bible is an impossible contradiction; an impossible being.

This Devil is the enemy of God and God is his. Now, why should this Devil, in another world, tor-

ment sinners, who are his friends, to please God, his enemy?

If the Devil is a personification, so is hell and the lake of fire and brimstone. All these horrors fade into allegories; into ignorant lies.

Any clergyman who can read the Bible and then say that devils are personifications of evil is himself a personification of stupidity or hypocrisy.

## VI.

Does any intelligent man now, whose brain has not been deformed by superstition, believe in the existence of the Devil? What evidence have we that he exists? Where does this Devil live? What does he do for a livelihood? What does he eat? If he does not eat, he cannot think. He cannot think without the expenditure of force. He cannot create force; he must borrow it—that is to say, he must eat. How does he move from place to place? Does he walk or does he fly, or has he invented some machine? What object has he in life? What idea of success? This Devil, according to the Bible, knows that he is to be defeated; knows that the end is absolute and eternal failure; knows that every step he takes leads to the infinite catastrophe. Why does he act as he does?

Our fathers thought that everything in this world came from some other realm; that all ideas of right and wrong came from above; that conscience dropped from the clouds; that the darkness was filled with imps from perdition, and the day with angels from

heaven; that souls had been breathed into man by Jehovah.

What there is in this world that lives and breathes was produced here. Life was not imported. Mind is not an exotic. Of this planet man is a native. This world is his mother. The maker did not descend from the heavens. The maker was and is here. Matter and force in their countless forms, affinities and repulsions produced the living, breathing world.

How can we account for devils? Is it possible that they creep into the bodies of men and swine? Do they stay in the stomach or brain, in the heart or liver?

Are these devils immortal or do they multiply and die? Were they all created at the same time or did they spring from a single pair? If they are subject to death what becomes of them after death? Do they go to some other world, are they annihilated, or can they get to heaven by believing on Christ?

In the brain of science the devils have never lived. There you will find no goblins, ghosts, wraiths or imps—no witches, spooks or sorcerers. There the supernatural does not exist. No man of sense in

the whole world believes in devils any more than he does in mermaids, vampires, gorgons, hydras, naiads, dryads, nymphs, fairies or the anthropophagi—any more than he does in the Fountain of Youth, the Philosopher's Stone, Perpetual Motion or Fiat Money.

There is the same difference between religion and science that there is between a madhouse and a university—between a fortune teller and a mathematician—between emotion and philosophy—between guess and demonstration.

The devils have gone, and with them they have taken the miracles of Christ. They have carried away our Lord. They have taken away the inspiration of the Bible, and we are left in the darkness of nature without the consolation of hell.

But let me ask the clergy a few questions:

How did your Devil, who was at one time an angel of light, come to sin? There was no other devil to tempt him. He was in perfectly good society—in the company of God—of the Trinity. All of his associates were perfect. How did he fall? He knew that God was infinite, and yet he waged war against

him and induced about a third of the angels to volunteer. He knew that he could not succeed; knew that he would be defeated and cast out; knew that he was fighting for failure.

Why was God so unpopular? Why were the angels so bad?

According to the Christians, these angels were spirits. They had never been corrupted by flesh—by the passion of love. Why were they so wicked?

Why did God create those angels, knowing that they would rebel? Why did he deliberately sow the seeds of discord in heaven, knowing that he would cast them into the lake of eternal fire—knowing that for them he would create the eternal prison, whose dungeons would echo forever the sobs and shrieks of endless pain?"

How foolish is infinite wisdom!

How malicious is mercy!

How revengeful is boundless love!

Again, I say that no sensible man in all the world believes in devils.

Why does God allow these devils to enjoy them-

selves at the expense of his ignorant children? Why does he allow them to leave their prison? Does he give them furloughs or tickets-of-leave?

Does he want his children misled and corrupted so that he can have the pleasure of damning their souls?

## VII.

### THE MAN OF STRAW.

Some of the preachers who have answered me say that I am fighting a man of straw.

I am fighting the supernatural—the dogma of inspiration—the belief in devils—the atonement, salvation by faith—the forgiveness of sins and the savagery of eternal pain. I am fighting the absurd, the monstrous, the cruel.

The ministers pretend that they have advanced—that they do not believe the things that I attack. In this they are not honest.

Who is the "man of straw"?

The man of straw is their master. In every orthodox pulpit stands this man of straw—stands beside the preacher—stands with a club, called a "creed," in his upraised hand. The shadow of this club falls athwart the open Bible—falls upon the preacher's brain, darkens the light of his reason and compels him to betray himself.

The man of straw rules every sectarian school and college—every orthodox church. He is the censor who passes on every sermon. Now and then some minister puts a little sense in his discourse—tries to take a forward step. Down comes the club, and the man of straw demands an explanation—a retraction. If the minister takes it back—good. If he does not, he is brought to book. The man of straw put the plaster of silence on the lips of Prof. Briggs, and he was forced to leave the church or remain dumb.

The man of straw closed the mouth of Prof. Smith, and he has not opened it since.

The man of straw would not allow the Presbyterian creed to be changed.

The man of straw took Father McGlynn by the collar, forced him to his knees, made him take back his words and ask forgiveness for having beer abused.

The man of straw pitched Prof. Swing out of the pulpit and drove the Rev. Mr. Thomas from the Methodist Church.

Let me tell the orthodox ministers that they are trying to cover their retreat.

You have given up the geology and astronomy of the Bible. You have admitted that its history is untrue. You are retreating still. You are giving up the dogma of inspiration; you have your doubts about the flood and Babel; you have given up the witches and wizards; you are beginning to throw away the miraculous; you have killed the little devils, and in a little while you will murder the Devil himself.

In a few years you will take the Bible for what it is worth. The good and true will be treasured in the heart; the foolish, the infamous, will be thrown away.

The man of straw will then be dead.

Of course, the real old petrified, orthodox Christian will cling to the Devil. He expects to have all of his sins charged to the Devil, and at the same time he will be credited with all the virtues of Christ. Upon this showing on the books, upon this balance, he will be entitled to his halo and harp. What a glorious, what an equitable, transaction! The sorcerer Superstition changes debt to credit. He waves his wand, and he who deserves the tortures of hell receives an eternal reward.

But if a man lacks faith the scheme is exactly reversed. While in one case a soul is rewarded for the virtues of another, in the other case a soul is damned for the sins of another. This is justice when it blossoms in mercy.

Beyond this idiocy cannot go.

## VIII.

### KEEP THE DEVILS OUT OF CHILDREN.

William Kingdon Clifford, one of the greatest men of this century, said: "If there is one lesson that history forces upon us in every page, it is this: Keep your children away from the priest, or he will make them the enemies of mankind."

In every orthodox Sunday school children are taught to believe in devils. Every little brain becomes a menagerie, filled with wild beasts from hell. The imagination is polluted with the deformed, the monstrous and malicious. To fill the minds of children with leering fiends—with mocking devils—is one of the meanest and basest of crimes. In these pious prisons — these divine dungeons — these Protestant and Catholic inquisitions—children are tortured with these cruel lies. Here they are taught that to really think is wicked; that to express your honest thought is blasphemy; and that to live a free and joyous life, depending on fact instead of faith, is the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Children thus taught—thus corrupted and deformed—become the enemies of investigation—of progress. They are no longer true to themselves. They have lost the veracity of the soul. In the language of Prof. Clifford, "they are the enemies of the human race."

So I say to all fathers and mothers, keep your children away from priests; away from orthodox Sunday schools; away from the slaves of superstition.

They will teach them to believe in the Devil; in hell; in the prison of God; in the eternal dungeon, where the souls of men are to suffer forever. These frightful things are a part of Christianity. Take these lies from the creed and the whole scheme falls into shapeless ruin. This dogma of hell is the infinite of savagery—the dream of insane revenge. It makes God a wild beast—an infinite hyena. It makes Christ as merciless as the fangs of a viper. Save poor children from the pollution of this horror. Protect them from this infinite lie.

## IX.

### Conclusion.

I admit that there are many good and beautiful passages in the Old and New Testament; that from the lips of Christ dropped many pearls of kindness—of love. Every verse that is true and tender I treasure in my heart. Every thought, behind which is the tear of pity, I appreciate and love. But I cannot accept it all. Many utterances attributed to Christ shock my brain and heart. They are absurd and cruel.

Take from the New Testament the infinite savagery, the shoreless malevolence of eternal pain, the absurdity of salvation by faith, the ignorant belief in the existence of devils, the immorality and cruelty of the atonement, the doctrine of non-resistance that denies to virtue the right of self-defence, and how glorious it would be to know that the remainder is true! Compared with this knowledge, how everything else in nature would shrink and shrivel! What ecstasy it would be to know that God exists; that he

is our father and that he loves and cares for the children of men! To know that all the paths that human beings travel, turn and wind as they may, lead to the gates of stainless peace! How the heart would thrill and throb to know that Christ was the conqueror of Death; that at his grave the all-devouring monster was baffled and beaten forever; that from that moment the tomb became the door that opens on eternal life! To know this would change all sorrow into gladness. Poverty, failure, disaster, defeat, power, place and wealth would become meaningless sounds. To take your babe upon your knee and say: "Mine and mine forever!" What joy! To clasp the woman you love in your arms and to know that she is yours and forever—yours though suns darken and constellations vanish! This is enough: To know that the loved and dead are not lost; that they still live and love and wait for you. To know that Christ dispelled the darkness of death and filled the grave with eternal light. To know this would be all that the heart could bear. Beyond this joy cannot go. Beyond this there is no place for hope.

How beautiful, how enchanting, Death would be! How we would long to see his fleshless skull! What rays of glory would stream from his sightless sockets, and how the heart would long for the touch of his stilling hand! The shroud would become a robe of glory, the funeral procession a harvest home, and the grave would mark the end of sorrow, the beginning of eternal joy.

And yet it were better far that all this should be false than that all of the New Testament should be true.

It is far better to have no heaven than to have heaven and hell; better to have no God than God and Devil; better to rest in eternal sleep than to be an angel and know that the ones you love are suffering eternal pain; better to live a free and loving life—a life that ends forever at the grave—than to be an immortal slave.

The master cannot be great enough to make slavery sweet. I have no ambition to become a winged servant, a winged slave. Better eternal sleep. But they say, "If you give up these superstitions, what have you left?"

Let me now give you the declaration of a creed.

## DECLARATION OF THE FREE.

We have no falsehoods to defend—
We want the facts;
Our force, our thought, we do not spend
In vain attacks.
And we will never meanly try
To save some fair and pleasing lie.

The simple truth is what we ask,
Not the ideal;
We've set ourselves the noble task
To find the real.
If all there is is naught but dross,
We want to know and bear our loss.

We will not willingly be fooled,
By fables nursed;
Our hearts, by earnest thought, are schooled
To bear the worst;
And we can stand erect and dare
All things, all facts that really are.

We have no God to serve or fear,
No hell to shun,
No devil with malicious leer.
When life is done
An endless sleep may close our eyes,
A sleep with neither dreams nor sighs.

We have no master on the land—
No king in air—
Without a manacle we stand,
Without a prayer,
Without a fear of coming night,
We seek the truth, we love the light.

We do not bow before a guess,
A vague unknown;
A senseless force we do not bless
In solemn tone.
When evil comes we do not curse,
Or thank because it is no worse.

When cyclones rend—when lightning blights,
'Tis naught but fate;
There is no God of wrath who smites
In heartless hate.
Behind the things that injure man
There is no purpose, thought, or plan.

We waste no time in useless dread,
In trembling fear;
The present lives, the past is dead,
And we are here,
All welcome guests at life's great feast—
We need no help from ghost or priest.

Our life is joyous, jocund, free—
Not one a slave
Who bends in fear the trembling knee,
And seeks to save
A coward soul from future pain;
Not one will cringe or crawl for gain.

The jeweled cup of love we drain,
And friendship's wine
Now swiftly flows in every vein
With warmth divine.
And so we love and hope and dream
That in death's sky there is a gleam.

We walk according to our light,
Pursue the path
That leads to honor's stainless height,
Careless of wrath
Or curse of God, or priestly spite,
Longing to know and do the right.

We love our fellow-man, our kind,
Wife, child, and friend.
To phantoms we are deaf and blind,
But we extend
The helping hand to the distressed;
By lifting others we are blessed.

Love's sacred flame within the heart
And friendship's glow;
While all the miracles of art
Their wealth bestow
Upon the thrilled and joyous brain,
And present raptures banish pain.

We love no phantoms of the skies,
But living flesh,
With passion's soft and soulful eyes,
Lips warm and fresh,
And cheeks with health's red flag unfurled.
The breathing angels of this world.

The hands that help are better far
Than lips that pray.
Love is the ever gleaming star
That leads the way,
That shines, not on vague worlds of bliss,
But on a paradise in this.

We do not pray, or weep, or wail;
We have no dread,
No fear to pass beyond the veil
That hides the dead.
And yet we question, dream, and guess,
But knowledge we do not possess.

We ask, yet nothing seems to know;
We cry in vain.
There is no "master of the show"
Who will explain,
Or from the future tear the mask;
And yet we dream, and still we ask

Is there beyond the silent night
An endless day?
Is death a door that leads to light?
We cannot say.
The tongueless secret locked in fate
We do not know.—We hope and wait.

# PROGRESS.

# PROGRESS.*

IT is admitted by all that happiness is the only good, happiness in its highest and grandest sense and the most * * springs * * of * * refined * * generous * *

Conscience * * tends * * indirectly * * truly we * * physically * * to develop the wonderful powers of the mind is progress.

It is impossible for men to become educated and refined without leisure and there can be no leisure without wealth and all wealth is produced by labor, nothing else. Nothing can * * the hands * * and * * fabrics * * service of civil * * and crumbles * * of all, and yet even in free America labor is not honored as it deserves.

We should remember that the prosperity of the world depends upon the men who walk in the fresh furrows and through the rustling corn, upon those whose faces are radiant with the glare of furnaces,

* This is the first lecture ever delivered by Mr. Ingersoll. The stars indicate the words missing in the manuscript. It was delivered in Pekin, Ill., in 1860, and again in Bloomington, Ill., in 1864.

upon the delvers in dark mines, the workers in shops, upon those who give to the wintry air the ringing music of the axe, and upon those who wrestle with the wild waves of the raging sea.

And it is from the surplus produced by labor that schools are built, that colleges and universities are founded and endowed. From this surplus the painter is paid for the immortal productions of the pencil. This pays the sculptor for chiseling the shapeless rock into forms of beauty almost divine, and the poet for singing the hopes, the loves and aspirations of the world.

This surplus has erected all the palaces and temples, all the galleries of art, has given to us all the books in which we converse, as it were, with the dead kings of the human race, and has supplied us with all there is of elegance, of beauty and of refined happiness in the world.

I am aware that the subject chosen by me is almost infinite and that in its broadest sense it is absolutely beyond the present comprehension of man.

I am also aware that there are many opinions as to what progress really is, that what one calls progress, another denominates barbarism; that many have a wonderful veneration for all that is ancient, merely because it is ancient, and they see no beauty

in anything from which they do not have to blow the dust of ages with the breath of praise.

They say, no masters like the old, no governments like the ancient, no orators, no poets, no statesmen like those who have been dust for two thousand years. Others despise antiquity and admire only the modern, merely because it is modern. They find so much to condemn in the past, that they condemn all. I hope, however, that I have gratitude enough to acknowledge the obligations I am under to the great and heroic minds of antiquity, and that I have manliness and independence enough not to believe what they said merely because they said it, and that I have moral courage enough to advocate ideas, however modern they may be, if I believe that they are right. Truth is neither young nor old, is neither ancient nor modern, but is the same for all times and places and should be sought for with ceaseless activity, eagerly acknowledged, loved more than life, and abandoned—never. In accordance with the idea that labor is the basis of all prosperity and happiness, is another idea or truth, and that is, that labor in order to make the laborer and the world at large happy, must be free. That the laborer must be a free man, the thinker must be free. I do not intend in what I may say upon this subject to carry

you back to the remotest antiquity,—back to Asia, the cradle of the world, where we could stand in the ashes and ruins of a civilization so old that history has not recorded even its decay. It will answer my present purpose to commence with the Middle Ages. In those times there was no freedom of either mind or body in Europe. Labor was despised, and a laborer was considered as scarcely above the beasts. Ignorance like a mantle covered the world, and superstition ran riot with the human imagination. The air was filled with angels, demons and monsters. Everything assumed the air of the miraculous. Credulity occupied the throne of reason and faith put out the eyes of the soul. A man to be distinguished had either to be a soldier or a monk. He could take his choice between killing and lying. You must remember that in those days nations carried on war as an end, not as a means. War and theology were the business of mankind. No man could win more than a bare existence by industry, much less fame and glory. Comparatively speaking, there was no commerce. Nations instead of buying and selling from and to each other, took what they wanted by brute force. And every Christian country maintained that it was no robbery to take the property of Mohammedans, and no murder to kill the

owners with or without just cause of quarrel. Lord Bacon was the first man of note who maintained that a Christian country was bound to keep its plighted faith with an Infidel one. In those days reading and writing were considered very dangerous arts, and any layman who had acquired the art of reading was suspected of being a heretic or a wizard.

It is almost impossible for us to conceive of the ignorance, the cruelty, the superstition and the mental blindness of that period. In reading the history of those dark and bloody years, I am amazed at the wickedness, the folly and presumption of mankind. And yet, the solution of the whole matter is, they despised liberty; they hated freedom of mind and of body. They forged chains of superstition for the one and of iron for the other. They were ruled by that terrible trinity, the cowl, the sword and chain.

You cannot form a correct opinion of those ages without reading the standard authors, so to speak, of that time, the laws then in force, and by ascertaining the habits and customs of the people, their mode of administering the laws, and the ideas that were commonly received as correct. No one believed that honest error could be innocent; no one dreamed of such a thing as religious freedom. In

the fifteenth century the following law was in force in England: "That whatsoever they were that should read the Scriptures in the mother tongue, they should forfeit land, cattle, body, life, and goods from their heirs forever, and so be condemned for heretics to God, enemies to the crown, and most arrant traitors to the land." The next year after this law was in force, in one day thirty-nine were hanged for its violation and their bodies afterward burned.

Laws equally unjust, bloody and cruel were in force in all parts of Europe. In the sixteenth century a man was burned in France because he refused to kneel to a procession of dirty monks. I could enumerate thousands of instances of the most horrid cruelty perpetrated upon men, women and even little children, for no other reason in the world than for a difference of opinion upon a subject that neither party knew anything about. But you are all, no doubt, perfectly familiar with the history of religious persecution.

There is one thing, however, that is strange indeed, and that is that the reformers of those days, the men who rose against the horrid tyranny of the times, the moment they attained power, persecuted with a zeal and bitterness never excelled. Luther, one of the

grand men of the world, cast in the heroic mould, although he gave utterance to the following sublime sentiment: "Every one has the right to read for himself that he may prepare himself to live and to die," still had no idea of what we call religious freedom. He considered universal toleration an error, so did Melancthon, and Erasmus, and yet, strange as it may appear, they were exercising the very right they denied to others, and maintaining their right with a courage and energy absolutely sublime.

John Knox was only in favor of religious freedom when he was in the minority, and Baxter entertained the same sentiment. Castalio, a professor at Geneva, in Switzerland, was the first clergyman in Europe who declared the innocence of honest error, and who proclaimed himself in favor of universal toleration. The name of this man should never be forgotten. He had the goodness, the courage, although surrounded with prisons and inquisitions, and in the midst of millions of fierce bigots, to declare the innocence of honest error, and that every man had a right to worship the good God in his own way.

For the utterance of this sublime sentiment his professorship was taken from him, he was driven from Geneva by John Calvin and his adherents, although he had belonged to their sect.

He was denounced as a child of the Devil, a dog of Satan, as a murderer of souls, as a corrupter of the faith, and as one who by his doctrines crucified the Savior afresh. Not content with merely driving him from his home, they pursued him absolutely to the grave, with a malignity that increased rather than diminished. You must not think that Calvin was alone in this; on the contrary he was fully sustained by public opinion, and would have been sustained even though he had procured the burning of the noble Castalio at the stake. I cite this instance not merely for the purpose of casting odium upon Calvin, but to show you what public opinion was at that time, when such things were ordinary transactions. Bodinus, a lawyer in France, about the same time advocated something like religious liberty, but public opinion was overwhelmingly against him and the people were at all times ready with torch and brand, chain, and fagot to get the abominable heresy out of the human mind, that a man had a right to think for himself. And yet Luther, Calvin, Knox and Baxter, in spite, as it were, of themselves, conferred a great and lasting benefit upon mankind; for what they did was at least in favor of individual judgment, and one successful stand against the church produced others, all of which tended to establish uni-

versal toleration. In those times you will remember that failing to convert a man or woman by the ordinary means, they resorted to every engine of torture that the ingenuity of bigotry could devise; they crushed their feet in what they called iron boots; they roasted them upon slow fires; they plucked out their nails, and then into the bleeding quick thrust needles; and all this to convince them of the truth. I suppose that we should love our neighbor as ourselves.

Montaigne was the first man who raised his voice against torture in France; a man blessed with so much common sense, that he was the most uncommon man of the age in which he lived. But what was one voice against the terrible cry of ignorant millions?—a drowning man in the wild roar of the infinite sea. It is impossible to read the history of the long and seemingly hopeless war waged for religious freedom, without being filled with horror and disgust. Millions of men, women and children, at least one hundred millions of human beings with hopes and loves and aspirations like ourselves, have been sacrificed upon the altar of bigotry. They have perished at the stake, in prisons, by famine and by sword; they have died wandering, homeless, in deserts, groping in caves, until their blood cried from the earth for vengeance. But the principle, gathering

strength from their weakness, nourished by blood and flame, rendered holier still by their sufferings—grander by their heroism, and immortal by their death, triumphed at last, and is now acknowledged by the whole civilized world. Enormous as the cost has been the principle is worth a thousand times as much. There must be freedom in religion, for without freedom there can be no real religion. And as for myself I glory in the fact that upon American soil that principle was first firmly established, and that the Constitution of the United States was the first of any great nation in which religious toleration was made one of the fundamental laws of the land. And it is not only the law of our country but the law is sustained by an enlightened public opinion. Without liberty there is no religion—no worship. What light is to the eyes—what air is to the lungs—what love is to the heart, liberty is to the soul of man. Without liberty, the brain is a dungeon, where the chained thoughts die with their pinions pressed against the hingeless doors.

## "WITCHCRAFT."

THE next fact to which I call your attention is, that during the Middle Ages the people, the whole people, the learned and the ignorant, the masters and the slaves, the clergy, the lawyers, doctors and statesmen, all believed in witchcraft—in the evil eye, and that the devil entered into people, into animals and even into insects to accomplish his dark designs. And all the people believed it their solemn duty to thwart the devil by all means in their power, and they accordingly set themselves at work hanging and burning everybody suspected of being in league with the Enemy of mankind. If you grant their premises, you justify their actions. If these persons had actually entered into partnership with the devil for the purpose of injuring their neighbors, the people would have been justified in exterminating them all. And the crime of witchcraft was proven over and over again in court after court in every town of Europe. Thousands of people who were charged with being in league with the devil

confessed the crime, gave all the particulars of the bargain, told just what the devil said and what they replied, and exactly how the bargain was consummated, admitted in the presence of death, on the very edge of the grave, when they knew that the confession would confiscate all their property and leave their children homeless wanderers, and render their own names infamous after death.

We can account for a man suffering death for what he believes to be right. He knows that he has the sympathy of all the truly good, and he hopes that his name will be gratefully remembered in the far future, and above all, he hopes to win the approval of a just God. But the man who confessed himself guilty of being a wizard, knew that his memory would be execrated and expected that his soul would be eternally lost. What motive could then have induced so many to confess? Strange as it is, I believe that they actually believed themselves guilty. They considered their case hopeless; they confessed and died without a prayer. These things are enough to make one think that sometimes the world becomes insane and that the earth is a vast asylum without a keeper. I repeat that I am convinced that the people that confessed themselves guilty believed that they were so. In the first place,

they believed in witchcraft and that people often were possessed of Satan, and when they were accused the fright and consternation produced by the accusation, in connection with their belief, often produced insanity or something akin to it, and the poor creatures charged with a crime that it was impossible to disprove, deserted and abhorred by their friends, left alone with their superstitions and fears, driven to despair, looked upon death as a blessed relief from a torture that you and I cannot at this day understand. People were charged with the most impossible crimes. In the time of James the First, a man was burned in Scotland for having produced a storm at sea for the purpose of drowning one of the royal family. A woman was tried before Sir Matthew Hale, one of the most learned and celebrated lawyers of England, for having caused children to vomit crooked pins. She was also charged with nursing demons. Of course she was found guilty, and the learned Judge charged the jury that there was no doubt as to the existence of witches, that all history, sacred and profane, and that the experience of every country proved it beyond any manner of doubt. And the woman was either hanged or burned for a crime for which it was impossible for her to be guilty. In those times they also believed

in Lycanthropy—that is, that persons of whom the devil had taken possession could assume the appearance of wolves.

One instance is related where a man was attacked by what appeared to be a wolf. He defended himself and succeeded in cutting off one of the wolf's paws, whereupon the wolf ran and the man picked up the paw and putting it in his pocket went home. When he took the paw out of his pocket it had changed to a human hand, and his wife sat in the house with one of her hands gone and the stump of her arm bleeding. He denounced his wife as a witch, she confessed the crime and was burned at the stake. People were burned for causing frosts in the summer, for destroying crops with hail, for causing cows to become dry, and even for souring beer. The life of no one was secure, malicious enemies had only to charge one with witchcraft, prove a few odd sayings and queer actions to secure the death of their victim. And this belief in witchcraft was so intense that to express a doubt upon the subject was to be suspected and probably executed. Believing that animals were also taken possession of by evil spirits and also believing that if they killed an animal containing one of the evil spirits that they caused the death of the spirit, they absolutely tried

animals, convicted and executed them. At Basle, in 1474, a rooster was tried, charged with having laid an egg, and as rooster eggs were used only in making witch ointment it was a serious charge, and everyone of course admitted that the devil must have been the cause, as roosters could not very well lay eggs without some help. And the egg having been produced in court, the rooster was duly convicted and he together with his miraculous egg were publicly and with all due solemnity burned in the public square. So a hog and six pigs were tried for having killed, and partially eaten a child, the hog was convicted and executed, but the pigs were acquitted on the ground of their extreme youth. As late as 1740 a cow was absolutely tried on a charge of being possessed of the devil. Our forefathers used to rid themselves of rats, leeches, locusts and vermin by pronouncing what they called a public exorcism.

On some occasions animals were received as witnesses in judicial proceedings.

The law was in some of the countries of Europe, that if a man's house was broken into between sunset and sunrise and the owner killed the intruder, it should be considered justifiable homicide.

But it was also considered that it was just possible that a man living alone might entice another to his

house in the night-time, kill him and then pretend that his victim was a robber. In order to prevent this, it was enacted that when a person was killed by a man living alone and under such circumstances, the solitary householder should not be held innocent unless he produced in court some animal, a dog or a cat, that had been an inmate of the house and had witnessed the death of the person killed. The prisoner was then compelled in the presence of such animal to make a solemn declaration of his innocence, and if the animal failed to contradict him, he was declared guiltless,—the law taking it for granted that the Deity would cause a miraculous manifestation by a dumb animal, rather than allow a murderer to escape. It was the law in England that any one convicted of a crime, could appeal to what was called corsned or morsel of execration. This was a piece of cheese or bread of about an ounce in weight, which was first consecrated with a form of exorcism desiring that the Almighty, if the man were guilty, would cause convulsions and paleness, and that it might stick in his throat, but that it might if the man were innocent, turn to health and nourishment. Godwin, the Earl of Kent, during the reign of Edward the Confessor, appealed to the corsned, which sticking in his throat, produced death. There were also

trials by water and by fire. Persons were made to handle red hot iron, and if it burned them their guilt was established; so their hands and feet were tied, and they were thrown into the water, and if they sank they were pronounced guilty and allowed to drown. I give these instances to show you what has happened, and what always will happen, in countries where ignorance prevails, and people abandon the great standard of reason. And also to show to you that scarcely any man, however great, can free himself of the superstitions of his time. Kepler, one of the greatest men of the world, and an astronomer second to none, although he plucked from the stars the secrets of the universe, was an astrologer and thought he could predict the career of any man by finding what star was in the ascendant at his birth. This infinitely foolish stuff was religiously believed by him, merely because he had been raised in an atmosphere of boundless credulity. Tycho Brahe, another astronomer who has been, and is called the prince of astronomers—not only believed in astrology, but actually kept an idiot in his service, whose disconnected and meaningless words he carefully wrote down and then put them together in such a manner as to make prophecies, and then he patiently and confidently awaited their fulfillment.

Luther believed that he had actually seen the devil not only, but that he had had discussions with him upon points of theology. On one occasion getting excited, he threw an inkstand at his majesty's head, and the ink stain is still to be seen on the wall where the stand was broken. The devil I believe, was untouched, he probably having an inkling of Luther's intention, made a successful dodge.

In the time of Charles the Fifth, Emperor of Germany, Stœffler, a noted mathematician and astronomer, a man of great learning, made an astronomical calculation according to the great science of astrology and ascertained that the world was to be visited by another deluge. This prediction was absolutely believed by the leading men of the empire not only, but of all Europe. The commissioner general of the army of Charles the Fifth recommended that a survey be made of the country by competent men in order to find out the highest land. But as it was uncertain how high the water would rise this idea was abandoned.

Thousands of people left their homes in low lands, by the rivers and near the sea and sought the more elevated ground. Immense suffering was produced. People in some instances abandoned the aged, the sick and the infirm to the tender

mercies of the expected flood, so anxious were they to reach some place of security.

At Toulouse, in France, the people actually built an ark and stocked it with provisions, and it was not till long after the day upon which the flood was to have come, had passed, that the people recovered from their fright and returned to their homes. About the same time it was currently reported and believed that a child had been born in Silesia with a golden tooth. The people were again filled with wonder and consternation. They were satisfied that some great evil was coming upon mankind. At last it was solved by some chapter in Daniel wherein is predicted somebody with a golden head. Such stories would never have gained credence only for the reason that the supernatural was expected. Anything in the ordinary course of nature was not worth telling. The human mind was in chains; it had been deformed by slavery. Reason was a trembling coward, and every production of the mind was deformed, every idea was a monster. Almost every law was unjust. Their religion was nothing more or less than monsters worshiping an imaginary monster. Science could not, properly speaking, exist. Their histories were the grossest and most palpable false-

hoods, and they filled all Europe with the most shocking absurdities. The histories were all written by the monks and bishops, all of whom were intensely superstitious, and equally dishonest. Everything they did was a pious fraud. They wrote as if they had been eye-witnesses of every occurrence that they related. They entertained, and consequently expressed, no doubt as to any particular, and in case of any difficulty they always had a few miracles ready just suited for the occasion, and the people never for an instant doubted the absolute truth of every statement that they made. They wrote the history of every country of any importance. They related all the past and present, and predicted nearly all the future, with an ignorant impudence actually sublime. They traced the order of St. Michael in France back to the Archangel himself, and alleged that he was the founder of a chivalric order in heaven itself. They also said that the Tartars originally came from hell, and that they were called Tartars because Tartarus was one of the names of perdition. They declared that Scotland was so called after Scota, a daughter of Pharaoh, who landed in Ireland and afterward invaded Scotland and took it by force of arms. This statement was made in a letter addressed to the Pope in the

14th century and was alluded to as a well-known fact. The letter was written by some of the highest dignitaries of the church and by direction of the king himself. Matthew, of Paris, an eminent historian of the 13th century, gave the world the following piece of valuable information: "It is well known that Mohammed originally was a Cardinal and became a heretic because he failed in his design of being elected Pope."

The same gentleman informs us that Mohammed having drank to excess fell drunk by the roadside, and in that condition was killed by pigs. And this is the reason, says he, that his followers abhor pork even unto this day. Another historian of about the same period, tells us that one of the popes cut off his hand because it had been kissed by an improper person, and that the hand was still in the Lateran at Rome, where it had been miraculously preserved from corruption for over five hundred years. After that occurrence, says he, the Pope's toe was substituted, which accounts for this practice. He also has the goodness to inform his readers that Nero was in the habit of vomiting frogs. Some of the croakers of the present day against progress would, I think, be the better of such a vomit. The history of Charlemagne was written by Turpin the Arch-

bishop of Rheims, and received the formal approbation of the Pope. In this it is asserted that the walls of a city fell down in answer to prayer; that Charlemagne was opposed by a giant called Fenacute who was a descendant of the ancient Goliath; that forty men were sent to attack this giant, and that he took them under his arms and quietly carried them away. At last Orlando engaged him singly; not meeting with the success that he anticipated, he changed his tactics and commenced a theological discussion; warming with his subject he pressed forward and suddenly stabbed his opponent, inflicting a mortal wound. After the death of the giant, Charlemagne easily conquered the whole country and divided it among his sons.

The history of the Britons, written by the Archdeacons of Monmouth and Oxford, was immensely popular. According to their account, Brutus, a Roman, conquered England, built London, called the country Britain after himself. During his time it rained blood for three days. At another time a monster came from the sea, and after having devoured a great many common people, finally swallowed the king himself. They say that King Arthur was not born like ordinary mortals, but was formed by a magical contrivance made by a wizard. That he was

particularly lucky in killing giants, that he killed one in France who used to eat several people every day, and that this giant was clothed with garments made entirely of the beards of kings that he had killed and eaten. To cap the climax, one of the authors of this book was promoted for having written an authentic history of his country. Another writer of the 15th century says that after Ignatius was dead they found impressed upon his heart the Greek word Theos. In all historical compositions there was an incredible want of common honesty. The great historian Eusebius ingenuously remarks that in his history he omitted whatever tended to discredit the church and magnified whatever conduced to her glory. The same glorious principle was adhered to by most, if not all, of the writers of those days. They wrote and the people believed that the tracks of Pharaoh's chariot wheels, were still impressed upon the sands of the Red Sea and could not be obliterated either by the winds or waves.

The next subject to which I call your attention is the wonderful progress in the mechanical arts. Animals use the weapons nature has furnished and those only—the beak, the claw, the tusk, the teeth. The barbarian uses a club, a stone. As man advances he makes tools with which to fash-

ion his weapons; he discovers the best material to be used in their construction. The next thing was to find some power to assist him—that is to say, the weight of falling water, or the force of the wind. He then creates a force, so to speak, by changing water to steam, and with that he impels machines that can do almost everything but think. You will observe that the ingenuity of man is first exercised in the construction of weapons. There were splendid Damascus blades when plowing was done with a crooked stick. There were complete suits of armor on backs that had never felt a shirt. The world was full of inventions to destroy life before there were any to prolong it or make it endurable. Murder was always a science—medicine is not one yet. Scalping was known and practiced long before Barret discovered the Hair Regenerator. The destroyers have always been honored. The useful have always been despised. In ancient times agriculture was known only to slaves. The low, the ignorant, the contemptible, cultivated the soil. To work was to be nobody. Mechanics were only one degree above the farmer. In short, labor was disgraceful. Idleness was the badge of gentle blood. The fields being poorly cultivated produced but little at the best. Only a few kinds of crops were raised. The result was frequent famine and con-

stant suffering. One country could not be supplied from another as now ; the roads were always horrible, and besides all this, every country was at war with nearly every other. This state of things lasted until a few years ago.

Let me show you the condition of England at the beginning of the eighteenth century. At that time London was the most populous capital in Europe, yet it was dirty, ill built, without any sanitary provisions whatever. The deaths were one in 23 each year. Now in a much more crowded population they are not one in forty. Much of the country was then heath and swamp. Almost within sight of London there was a tract, twenty-five miles round, almost in a state of nature ; there were but three houses upon it. In the rainy season the roads were almost impassable. Through gullies filled with mud, carriages were dragged by oxen. Between places of great importance the roads were little known, and a principal mode of transport was by pack horses, of which passengers took advantage by stowing themselves away between the packs. The usual charge for freight was 30 cents per ton a mile. After a while, what they were pleased to call flying coaches were established. They could move from thirty to fifty miles a day. Many persons thought the

risk so great that it was tempting Providence to get into one of them. The mail bag was carried on horseback at five miles an hour. A penny post had been established in the city, but many long-headed men, who knew what they were saying, denounced it as a popish contrivance. Only a few years before, Parliament had resolved that all pictures in the royal collection which contained representations of Jesus or the Virgin Mary should be burned. Greek statues were handed over to Puritan stone masons to be made decent. Lewis Meggleton had given himself out as the last and the greatest of the prophets, having power to save or damn. He had also discovered that God was only six feet high and the sun four miles off. There were people in England as savage as our Indians. The women, half naked, would chant some wild measure, while the men would brandish their dirks and dance. There were thirty-four counties without a printer. Social discipline was wretched. The master flogged his apprentice, the pedagogue his scholar, the husband his wife; and I am ashamed to say that whipping has not been abolished in our schools. It is a relic of barbarism and should not be tolerated one moment. It is brutal, low and contemptible. The teacher that administers such punishment is no more to

blame than the parents that allow it. Every gentleman and lady should use his or her influence to do away with this vile and infamous practice. In those days public punishments were all brutal. Men and women were put in the pillory and then pelted with brick-bats, rotten eggs and dead cats by the rabble. The whipping-post was then an institution in England as it is now in the enlightened State of Delaware. Criminals were drawn and quartered; others were disemboweled and hung and their bodies suspended in chains to rot in the air. The houses of the people in the country were huts, thatched with straw. Anybody who could get fresh meat once a week was considered rich. Children six years old had to labor. In London the houses were of wood or plaster, the streets filthy beyond expression, even muddier than Bloomington is now. After nightfall a passenger went about at his peril, for chamber windows were opened and slop pails unceremoniously emptied. There were no lamps in the streets, but plenty of highwaymen and robbers.

The morals of the people corresponded, as they generally do, to their physical condition. It is said that the clergy did what they could to make the people pious, but they could not accomplish

much. You cannot convert a man when he is hungry. He will not accept better doctrines until he gets better clothes, and he won't have more faith till he gets more food. Besides this, the clergy were a little below par, so much so that Queen Elizabeth issued an order that no clergyman should presume to marry a servant girl without the consent of her master or mistress. During the same time the condition of France and indeed of all Europe was even worse than England. What has changed the condition of Great Britain? More than any and everything else, the inventions of her mechanics. The old moral method was and always will be a failure. If you wish to better the condition of a people morally, better them physically. About the close of the 18th Century, Watt, Arkwright, Hargreave, Crompton, Cartwright, invented the steam engine, the spring frame, the jenny, the mule, the power loom, the carding machine and a hundred other minor inventions, and put it in the power of England to monopolize the markets of the world. Her machinery soon became equal to 30,000,000 of men. In a few years the population was doubled and the wealth quadrupled; and England became the first nation of the world through her inventors, her merchants, her mechanics, and in spite of her

statesmen, her priests and her nobles. England began to spin for the world, cotton began to be universally worn, clean shirts began to be seen. The most cunning spinners of India could make a thread over 100 miles long from one pound of cotton. The machines of England have produced one over 1000 miles in length from the same quantity. In a short time Stephenson invented the locomotive. Railroads began to be built. Fulton gave to the world the steamboat, and commerce became independent of the winds. There are already railroads enough in the United States to make a double track around the world. Man has lengthened his arms. He reaches to every country and takes what he wants; the world is before him; he helps himself. There can be no more famine. If there is no food in this country, the boat and the car will bring it from another.

We can have the luxuries of every climate. A majority of the people now live better than the king used to do. Poor Solomon with his thousand wives, and no carpets, his great temple, and no gas light! A thousand women, and not a pin in the house; no stoves, no cooking range, no baking powder, no potatoes—think of it! Breakfast without potatoes! Plenty of wisdom and old saws—but no green corn;

never heard of succotash in his whole life. No clean clothes, no music, if you except a jew's-harp, no ice water, no skates, no carriages, because there was not a decent road in all his dominions. Plenty of theology but no tobacco, no books, no pictures, not a picture in all Palestine, not a piece of statuary, not a plough that would scour. No tea, no coffee; he never heard of any place of amusement, never was at a theatre, or a circus. "Seven up" was then unknown to the world. He couldn't even play billiards, with all his knowledge, never had an idea of woman's rights, or universal suffrage; never went to school a day in his life, and cared no more about the will of the people than Andy Johnson.

The inventors have helped more than any other class to make the world what it is; the workers and the thinkers, the poor and the grand; labor and learning, industry and intelligence; Watt and Descartes, Fulton and Montaigne, Stephenson and Kepler, Crompton and Comte, Franklin and Voltaire, Morse and Buckle, Draper and Spencer, and hundreds more that I could mention. The inventors, the workers, the thinkers, the mechanics, the surgeons, the philosphers—these are the Atlases upon whose shoulders rests the great fabric of modern civilization.

## LANGUAGE.

IN order to show you that the most abject superstition pervaded every department of human knowledge, or of ignorance rather, allow me to give you a few of their ideas upon language. It was universally believed that all languages could be traced back to the Hebrew; that the Hebrew was the original language, and every fact inconsistent with that idea was discarded. In consequence of this belief all efforts to investigate the science of language were utterly fruitless. After a time, the Hebrew idea falling into disrepute, other languages claimed the honor of being the original ones.

André Kempe published a work in 1569, on the language of Paradise, in which he maintained that God spoke to Adam in Swedish; that Adam answered in Danish and that the serpent (which appears quite probable) spoke to Eve in French. Erro, in a book published at Madrid, took the ground that Basque was the language spoken in the Garden

of Eden. But in 1580, Goropius published his celebrated work at Antwerp, in which he put the whole matter at rest by proving that the language spoken in Paradise was nothing more or less than plain Holland Dutch. The real founder of the present science of language was a German, Leibnitz—a contemporary of Sir Isaac Newton. He discarded the idea that all language could be traced to an original one. That language was, so to speak, a natural growth. Actual experience teaches us that this must be true. The ancient sages of Egypt had a vocabulary, according to Bunsen, of only about six hundred and eighty-five words, exclusive of proper names. The English language has at least one hundred thousand.

## GEOGRAPHY.

IN the 6th century a monk by the name of Cosmas wrote a kind of orthodox geography and astronomy combined. He pretended that it was all in accordance with the Bible. According to him, the world was composed, first, of a flat piece of land and circular ; this piece of land was entirely surrounded by water which was the ocean, and beyond the strip of water was another circle of land ; this outside circle was the land inhabited by the old world before the flood ; Noah crossed the strip of water and landed on the central piece where we now are ; on the outside land was a high mountain around which the sun and moon revolved ; when the sun was behind the mountain it was night, and when on the side next us it was day. He also taught that on the outer edge of the outside circle of land the firmament or sky was fastened, that it was made of some solid material and turned over the world like an immense kettle. And it was declared at that

time that anyone who believed either more or less on that subject than that book contained was a heretic and deserved to be exterminated from the face of the earth. This was authority until the discovery of America by Columbus. Cosmas said the earth was flat; if it was round how could men on the other side at the day of judgment see the coming of the Lord? At the risk of being tiresome, I have said what I have, to show you the productions of the mind when enslaved—the consequences of abandoning judgment and reason—the effects of wide spread ignorance and universal bigotry.

I want to convince you that every wrong is a viper that will sooner or later strike with poisoned fangs the bosom that nourishes it. You will ask what has produced this wonderful change in only three hundred years. You will remember that in those days it was said that all ghosts vanished at the dawn of day; that the sprites, the spooks, the hobgoblins and all the monsters of the imagination fled from the approaching sun. In 1441, printing was invented. In the next century it became a power, and it has been flooding the world with light from that time to this. The Press has been the true Prometheus.

It has been, so to speak, the trumpet blown by the Gabriel of Progress, until, from the graves of

ignorance and superstition, the people have leaped to grand and glorious life, spurning with swift feet the dust of an infamous past.

When people read, they reason, when they reason they progress. You must not think that the enemies of progress allowed books to be published or read when they had the power to prevent it. The whole power of the church, of the government, was arrayed upon the side of ignorance. People found in the possession of books were often executed. Printing, reading and writing were crimes. Anathemas were hurled from the Vatican against all who dared to publish a word in favor of liberty or the sacred rights of man. The Inquisition was founded on purpose to crush out every noble aspiration of the heart. It was a war of darkness against light, of slavery against liberty, of superstition against reason. I shall not attempt to recount the horrors and tortures of the Inquisition. Suffice it to say that they were equal to the most terrible and vivid pictures even of Hell, and the Inquisitors were even more horrid fiends than even a real Perdition could boast. But in spite of priests, in spite of kings, in spite of mitres, in spite of crowns, in spite of Cardinals and Popes, books were published and books were read. Beam

after beam of light penetrated the darkness. Star after star arose in the firmament of ignorance. The morning of Freedom began to dawn. Driven to madness by the prospect of ultimate defeat, the enemies of light persecuted with redoubled fury.

People were burned for saying that the earth was round, for saying that the sun was the center of a system. A woman was executed because she endeavored to allay the pains of a fever by singing. The very name of Philosopher became a title of proscription, and the slightest offences were punished by death. About the beginning of the sixteenth century Luther and Jerome, of Prague, inaugurated the great Reformation in Germany, Ziska was at work in Hungary, Zwinglius in Switzerland. The grand work went forward in Denmark, in Sweden and in England. All this was accomplished as early as 1534. They unmasked the corruption and withstood the tyranny of the church.

With a zeal amounting to enthusiasm, with a courage that was heroic, with an energy that never flagged, a determination that brooked no opposition, with a firmness that defied torture and death, this sublime band of reformers sprang to the attack. Stronghold after stronghold was carried, and in a few short but terrible years, the banner of the Re-

formation waved in triumph over the bloody ensign of Saint Peter. The soul roused from the slumbers of a thousand years began to think. When slaves begin to reason, slavery begins to die. The invention of powder had released millions from the army, and left them to prosecute the arts of peace. Industry began to be remunerative and respectable.

Science began to unfold the wings that will finally fill the heavens. Descartes announced to the world the sublime truth that the Universe is governed by law.

Commerce began to unfold her wings. People of different countries began to get acquainted. Christians found that Mohammedan gold was not the less valuable on account of the doctrines of its owners. Telescopes began to be pointed toward the stars. The Universe was getting immense. The Earth was growing small. It was discovered that a man could be healthy without being a Catholic. Innumerable agencies were at work dispelling darkness and creating light. The supernatural began to be abandoned, and mankind endeavored to account for all physical phenomena by physical laws. The light of reason was irradiating the world, and from that light, as from the approach of the sun, the ghosts and spectres of superstition wrapped their sheets

around their attenuated bodies and vanished into thin air. Other inventions rapidly followed. The wonderful power of steam was made known to the world by Watts and by Fulton. Neptune was frightened from the sea. The locomotive was given to mankind by Stephenson; the telegraph by Franklin and Morse. The rush of the ship, the scream of the locomotive, and the electric flash have frightened the monsters of ignorance from the world, and have left nothing above us but the heaven's eternal blue, filled with glittering planets wheeling through immensity in accordance with *Law*. True religion is a subordination of the passions and interests to the perceptions of the intellect. But when religion was considered the end of life instead of a means of happiness, it overshadowed all other interests and became the destroyer of mankind. It became a hydra-headed monster—a serpent reaching in terrible coils from the heavens and thrusting its thousand fangs into the bleeding, quivering hearts of men.

## SLAVERY.

I HAVE endeavored thus far to show you some of the results produced by enslaving the human mind. I now call your attention to another terrible phase of this subject; the enslavement of the body. Slavery is a very ancient institution, yes, about as ancient as robbery, theft and murder, and is based upon them all.

Springing from the same fountain, that a man is not the owner of his soul, is the doctrine that he is not the owner of his body. The two are always found together, supported by precisely the same arguments, and attended by the same infamous acts of cruelty. From the earliest time, slavery has existed in all countries, and among all people until recently. Pufendorf said that slavery was originally established by contract. Voltaire replied, "Show me the original contract, and if it is signed by the party that was to be a slave I will believe you." You will bear in mind that the slavery of which I am now speaking is white slavery.

Greeks enslaved one another as well as those captured in war. Coriolanus scrupled not to make slaves of his own countrymen captured in civil war.

Julius Cæsar sold to the highest bidder at one time fifty-three thousand prisoners of war all of whom were white. Hannibal exposed to sale thirty thousand captives at one time, all of whom were Roman citizens. In Rome, men were sold into bondage in order to pay their debts. In Germany, men often hazarded their freedom on the throwing of dice. The Barbary States held white Christians in slavery in this, the 19th century. There were white slaves in England as late as 1574. There were white slaves in Scotland until the end of the 18th century.

These Scotch slaves were colliers and salters. They were treated as real estate and passed with a deed to the mines in which they worked.

It was also the law that no collier could work in any mine except the one to which he belonged. It was also the law that their children could follow no other occupation than that of their fathers. This slavery absolutely existed in Scotland until the beginning of the glorious 19th century.

Some of the Roman nobles were the owners of as many as twenty thousand slaves.

The common people of France were in slavery for fourteen hundred years. They were transferred with land, and women were often seen assisting cattle to pull the plough, and yet people have the impudence to say that black slavery is right, because the blacks have always been slaves in their own country. I answer, so have the whites until very recently. In the good old days when might was right and when kings and popes stood by the people, and protected the people, and talked about "holy oil and divine right," the world was filled with slaves. The traveler standing amid the ruins of ancient cities and empires, seeing on every side the fallen pillar and the prostrate wall, asks why did these cities fall, why did these empires crumble? And the Ghost of the Past, the wisdom of ages, answers: These temples, these palaces, these cities, the ruins of which you stand upon were built by tyranny and injustice. The hands that built them were unpaid. The backs that bore the burdens also bore the marks of the lash. They were built by slaves to satisfy the vanity and ambition of thieves and robbers. For these reasons they are dust.

Their civilization was a lie. Their laws merely regulated robbery and established theft. They bought and sold the bodies and souls of men,

and the mournful winds of desolation, sighing amid their crumbling ruins, is a voice of prophetic warning to those who would repeat the infamous experiment. From the ruins of Babylon, of Carthage, of Athens, of Palmyra, of Thebes, of Rome, and across the great desert, over that sad and solemn sea of sand, from the land of the pyramids, over the fallen Sphinx and from the lips of Memnon the same voice, the same warning and uttering the great truth, that no nation founded upon slavery, either of body or mind, can stand.

And yet, to-day, there are thousands upon thousands endeavoring to build the temples and cities and to administer our Government upon the old plan. They are makers of brick without straw. They are bowing themselves beneath hods of untempered mortar. They are the babbling builders of another Babel, a Babel of mud upon a foundation of sand.

Nothwithstanding the experience of antiquity as to the terrible effects of slavery, bondage was the rule, and liberty the exception, during the Middle Ages not only, but for ages afterward.

The same causes that led to the liberation of mind also liberated the body. Free the mind, allow men to write and publish and read, and one by

one the shackles will drop, broken, in the dust. This truth was always known, and for that reason slaves have never been allowed to read. It has always been a crime to teach a slave. The intelligent prefer death to slavery. Education is the most radical abolitionist in the world. To teach the alphabet is to inaugurate revolution. To build a schoolhouse is to construct a fort. Every library is an arsenal, and every truth is a monitor, iron-clad and steel-plated.

Do not think that white slavery was abolished without a struggle. The men who opposed white slavery were ridiculed, were persecuted, driven from their homes, mobbed, hanged, tortured and burned. They were denounced as having only one idea, by men who had none. They were called fanatics by men who were so insane as to suppose that the laws of a petty prince were greater than those of the Universe. Crime made faces at virtue, and honesty was an outcast beggar. In short, I cannot better describe to you the manner in which the friends of slavery acted at that time, than by saying that they acted precisely as they used to do in the United States. White slavery, established by kidnapping and piracy, sustained by torture and infinite cruelty, was defended to the very last.

Let me now call your attention to one of the most immediate causes of the abolition of white slavery in Europe. There were during the Middle Ages three great classes of people: the common people, the clergy and the nobility. All these people could, however, be divided into two classes, namely, the robbed and the robbers. The feudal lords were jealous of the king, the king afraid of the lords, the clergy always siding with the stronger party. The common people had only to do the work, the fighting, and to pay the taxes, as by the law the property of the nobles was exempt from taxation. The consequence was, in every war between the nobles and the king, each party endeavored by conciliation to get the peasants upon their side. When the clergy were on the side of the king they created dissension between the people and the nobles by telling them that the nobles were tyrants. When they were on the side of the nobles they told the people that the king was a tyrant. At last the people believed both, and the old adage was verified, that when thieves fall out honest men get their dues.

By virtue of the civil and religious wars of Europe, slavery was abolished, and the French Revolution, one of the grandest pages in all history, was, so to speak, the exterminator of white slavery. In that

terrible period the people who had borne the yoke for fourteen hundred years, rising from the dust, casting their shackles from them, fiercely avenged their wrongs. A mob of twenty millions driven to desperation, in the sublimity of despair, in the sacred name of Liberty cried for vengeance. They reddened the earth with the blood of their masters. They trampled beneath their feet the great army of human vermin that had lived upon their labor. They filled the air with the ruins of temples and thrones, and with bloody hands tore in pieces the altar upon which their rights had been offered by an impious church. They scorned the superstitions of the past not only, but they scorned the past; for the past to them was only wrong, imposition and outrage. The French Revolution was the inauguration of a new era. The lava of freedom long buried beneath a mountain of wrong and injustice at last burst forth, overwhelming the Pompeii and Herculaneum of priestcraft and tyranny. As soon as white slavery began to decay in Europe, and while the condition of the white slaves was improving about the middle of the 16th century in 1541, Alonzo Gonzales, of Portugal, pointed out to his countrymen a new field of operations, a new market for human flesh, and in a short time the Af-

rican slave-trade with all its unspeakable horrors was inaugurated.

This trade has been the great crime of modern times. It is almost impossible to conceive that nations who professed to be Christian, or even in any degree civilized, should have engaged in this infamous traffic. Yet nearly all of the nations of Europe engaged in the slave-trade, legalized it, protected it, fostered the practice, and vied with each other in acts, the bare recital of which is enough to make the heart stand still.

It has been calculated that for years, at least 400,000 Africans were either killed or enslaved annually. They crammed their ships so full of these unfortunate wretches, that, as a general thing, about ten per cent. died of suffocation on the voyage. They were treated like wild beasts. In times of danger they were thrown into the sea. Remember that this horrible traffic commenced in the middle of the 16th century, was carried on by nations pretending to Christian civilization, and when do you think it was abolished by some of the principal countries? In England, Wilberforce and Clarkson dedicated their lives to the abolition of the slave-trade. They were hated and despised. They persevered for twenty years, and it was not until the 25th of March,

1808, that England pronounced the infamous traffic in human flesh illegal, and the rejoicing in England was redoubled on receiving the news that the United States had done the same thing. After a time, those engaged in the slave-trade were declared pirates.

On the 28th day of August, 1833, England abolished slavery throughout the British Colonies, thus giving liberty to nearly one million slaves.

The United States was then the greatest slave-holding power in the civilized world.

We are all acquainted with the history of slavery in this country. We know that it corrupted our people, that it has drenched our land in fraternal blood, that it has clad our country in mourning for the loss of 300,000 of her bravest sons; that it carried us back to the darkest ages of the world, that it led us to the very brink of destruction, forced us to the shattered gates of eternal ruin, death and annihilation. But Liberty rising above party prejudice, Freedom lifting itself above all other considerations,

"As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,—
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

And on the 1st day of January, 1863, the grandest New Year that ever dawned upon this continent, in accordance with the will of the heroic North, by the sublime act of one whose name will be sacred through all the coming years, the justice so long delayed was accomplished, and four millions of slaves became chainless.

## LIBERTY TRIUMPHED.

LIBERTY, that most sacred word, without which all other words are vain, without which, life is worse than death, and men are beasts! I never see the word Liberty without seeing a halo of glory around it. It is a word worthy of the lips of a God. Can you realize the fact that only a few years ago, the most shocking system of slavery—the most barbarous—existed in our country, and that you and I were bound by the laws of the United States to stand between a human being and his liberty? That we were absolutely compelled by law to hand back that human being to the lash and chain? That by our laws children were sold from the arms of mothers, wives sold from their husbands? That we executed our laws with the assistance of blood-hounds, owned and trained by human bloodhounds fiercer still, and that all this was not only upheld by politicians, but by the pretended ministers of Christ? That the pulpit was in partnership with the auction

block—that the bloodhound's bark was only an echo from many of the churches? And that this was all done under the sacred name of Liberty, by a republican government that was founded upon the sublime declaration that all men are equal? This all seems to me like a horrible dream, a nightmare of terror, a hellish impossibility. And yet, with cheeks glowing and burning with shame, before the bar of history, we are forced to plead guilty to this terrible charge. We made a whipping-post of the cross of Christ. It is true that in a great degree we have atoned for this national crime. Our bravest and our best have been sacrificed. We have borne the bloody burden of war. The good and the true have been with us, and the women of the North have won glory imperishable. They robbed war of half its terrors. Not content with binding the wreath of victory upon the leader's brow, they bandaged the soldiers' wounds, they nerved the living, comforted the dying, and smiled upon the great victory through their tears.

They have consoled the hero's widow and are educating his orphans. They have erected a monument to enlightened charity to which time can add only grandeur. There is much, however, to be accomplished still. Slavery has been abolished, but

Progress requires more. We are called upon to make this a free government in the broadest sense, to give liberty to all. Standing in the presence of all history, knowing the experience of mankind, knowing that the earth is covered with countless wrecks of cruel failures; appealed to by the great army of martyrs and heroes who have gone before; by the sacred dust filling innumerable graves; by the memory of our own noble dead; by all the suffering of the past; by all the hopes for the future; by all the glorious dead and the countless millions yet to be, I pray, I beseech, I implore the American people to lay the foundation of the Government upon the principles of eternal justice. I pray, I beseech, I implore them to take for the corner-stone, Universal Human Liberty —the stone which has been heretofore rejected by all the builders of nations. The Government will then stand, and the swelling dome of the temple will touch the stars.

## CONCLUSION.

I HAVE thus endeavored to show you some of the effects of slavery, and to prove to you that a step in order to be in the direction of progress must be in the direction of freedom; that slavery either of body or mind is barbarism and is practiced and defended only by infamous tyrants or their dupes. I have endeavored to point out some of the causes of the abolition of slavery, both of body and mind. There is one truth, however, that you must not forget, and that is, that every evil tends to correct and abolish itself. I believe, however, that the diffusion of knowledge, more than everything else combined, has ameliorated the condition of mankind. When there was no freedom of speech and no press, then every idea perished in the brain that gave it birth. One man could not profit by the thought of another. The experience of the past was in a great degree unknown. And this state of things produced the same effect in the mental world, that confining all

the water to the springs would in the physical. Confine the water to the springs, the rivulets would cease to murmur, the rivers to flow, and the ocean itself would become a desert of sand. But with the invention of printing, ideas began to circulate, born of the busy brain of the million—little rivulets of facts running into rivers of information, and they all flowing into the great ocean of human knowledge.

This exchange of ideas, this comparison of thought, has given to each generation the advantage of all the past. This, more than all else, has enabled man to improve his condition. It is by this that from the log or piece of bark on which a naked savage floated, we have by successive improvements created a man-of-war carrying a hundred guns and miles of canvas. By these means we have changed a handful of sand into a telescope. In the hands of science a drop of water has become a giant, turning with swift and tireless arm the countless wheels. The sun has become an artist painting with shining beams the very thoughts within our eyes. The elements have been taught to do our bidding, and the electric spark, freighted with human thought and love, defies distance, and devours time as it sweeps under all the waves of the sea.

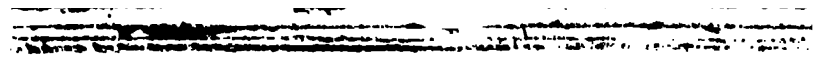
These are some of the results of free thought and

free labor. I have barely alluded to a few—where is improvement to stop? Science is only in its infancy. It has accomplished all this and is in its cradle still.

We are standing on the shore of an infinite ocean whose countless waves, freighted with blessings, are welcoming our adventurous feet. Progress has been written on every soul. The human race is advancing.

Forward, oh sublime army of progress, forward until law is justice, forward until ignorance is unknown, forward while there is a spiritual or temporal throne, forward until superstition is a forgotten dream, forward until the world is free, forward until human reason, clothed in the purple of authority, is king of kings.

# WHAT IS RELIGION?



# WHAT IS RELIGION?*

IT is asserted that an infinite God created all things, governs all things, and that the creature should be obedient and thankful to the creator; that the creator demands certain things, and that the person who complies with these demands is religious. This kind of religion has been substantially universal.

For many centuries and by many peoples it was believed that this God demanded sacrifices; that he was pleased when parents shed the blood of their babes. Afterward it was supposed that he was satisfied with the blood of oxen, lambs and doves, and that in exchange for or on account of these sacrifices, this God gave rain, sunshine and harvest. It was also believed that if the sacrifices were not made, this God sent pestilence, famine, flood and earthquake.

The last phase of this belief in sacrifice was,

*This was Col. Ingersoll's last public address, delivered before the American Free Religious Association, in the Hollis Street Theatre, Boston, June 2, 1890.

according to the Christian doctrine, that God accepted the blood of his son, and that after his son had been murdered, he, God, was satisfied, and wanted no more blood.

During all these years and by all these peoples it was believed that this God heard and answered prayer, that he forgave sins and saved the souls of true believers. This, in a general way, is the definition of religion.

Now, the questions are, Whether religion was founded on any known fact? Whether such a being as God exists? Whether he was the creator of yourself and myself? Whether any prayer was ever answered? Whether any sacrifice of babe or ox secured the favor of this unseen God?

*First.*—Did an infinite God create the children of men?

Why did he create the intellectually inferior?

Why did he create the deformed and helpless?

Why did he create the criminal, the idiotic, the insane?

Can infinite wisdom and power make any excuse for the creation of failures?

Are the failures under obligation to their creator?

*Second.*—Is an infinite God the governor of this world?

Is he responsible for all the chiefs, kings, emperors, and queens?

Is he responsible for all the wars that have been waged, for all the innocent blood that has been shed?

Is he responsible for the centuries of slavery, for the backs that have been scarred with the lash, for the babes that have been sold from the breasts of mothers, for the families that have been separated and destroyed?

Is this God responsible for religious persecution, for the Inquisition, for the thumb-screw and rack, and for all the instruments of torture?

Did this God allow the cruel and vile to destroy the brave and virtuous? Did he allow tyrants to shed the blood of patriots?

Did he allow his enemies to torture and burn his friends?

What is such a God worth?

Would a decent man, having the power to prevent it, allow his enemies to torture and burn his friends?

Can we conceive of a devil base enough to prefer his enemies to his friends?

If a good and infinitely powerful God governs this world, how can we account for cyclones, earthquakes, pestilence and famine?

How can we account for cancers, for microbes, for diphtheria and the thousand diseases that prey on infancy?

How can we account for the wild beasts that devour human beings, for the fanged serpents whose bite is death?

How can we account for a world where life feeds on life?

Were beak and claw, tooth and fang, invented and produced by infinite mercy?

Did infinite goodness fashion the wings of the eagles so that their fleeing prey could be overtaken?

Did infinite goodness create the beasts of prey with the intention that they should devour the weak and helpless?

Did infinite goodness create the countless worthless living things that breed within and feed upon the flesh of higher forms?

Did infinite wisdom intentionally produce the microscopic beasts that feed upon the optic nerve?

Think of blinding a man to satisfy the appetite of a microbe!

Think of life feeding on life! Think of the victims! Think of the Niagara of blood pouring over the precipice of cruelty!

In view of these facts, what, after all, is religion?

It is fear.

Fear builds the altar and offers the sacrifice.

Fear erects the cathedral and bows the head of man in worship.

Fear bends the knees and utters the prayer.

Fear pretends to love.

Religion teaches the slave-virtues—obedience, humility, self-denial, forgiveness, non-resistance.

Lips, religious and fearful, tremblingly repeat this passage: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." This is the abyss of degradation.

Religion does not teach self-reliance, independence, manliness, courage, self-defence. Religion makes God a master and man his serf. The master cannot be great enough to make slavery sweet.

## II.

IF this God exists, how do we know that he is good? How can we prove that he is merciful, that he cares for the children of men? If this God exists, he has on many occasions seen millions of his poor children plowing the fields, sowing and planting the grain, and when he saw them he knew that they depended on the expected crop for life, and yet this good God, this merciful being, withheld the rain. He caused the sun to rise, to steal all moisture from the land, but gave no rain. He saw the seeds that man had planted wither and perish, but he sent no rain. He saw the people look with sad eyes upon the barren earth, and he sent no rain. He saw them slowly devour the little that they had, and saw them when the days of hunger came—saw them slowly waste away, saw their hungry, sunken eyes, heard their prayers, saw them devour the miserable animals that they had, saw fathers and mothers, insane with hunger, kill and eat their shriveled babes, and yet the heaven above them was as brass and the earth beneath as iron, and he

sent no rain. Can we say that in the heart of this God there blossomed the flower of pity? Can we say that he cared for the children of men? Can we say that his mercy endureth forever?

Do we prove that this God is good because he sends the cyclone that wrecks villages and covers the fields with the mangled bodies of fathers, mothers and babes? Do we prove his goodness by showing that he has opened the earth and swallowed thousands of his helpless children, or that with the volcanoes he has overwhelmed them with rivers of fire? Can we infer the goodness of God from the facts we know?

If these calamities did not happen, would we suspect that God cared nothing for human beings? If there were no famine, no pestilence, no cyclone, no earthquake, would we think that God is not good?

According to the theologians, God did not make all men alike. He made races differing in intelligence, stature and color. Was there goodness, was there wisdom in this?

Ought the superior races to thank God that they are not the inferior? If we say yes, then I ask another question: Should the inferior races thank God that they are not superior, or should they thank God that they are not beasts?

When God made these different races he knew that the superior would enslave the inferior, knew that the inferior would be conquered, and finally destroyed.

If God did this, and knew the blood that would be shed, the agonies that would be endured, saw the countless fields covered with the corpses of the slain, saw all the bleeding backs of slaves, all the broken hearts of mothers bereft of babes, if he saw and knew all this, can we conceive of a more malicious fiend?

Why, then, should we say that God is good?

The dungeons against whose dripping walls the brave and generous have sighed their souls away, the scaffolds stained and glorified with noble blood, the hopeless slaves with scarred and bleeding backs, the writhing martyrs clothed in flame, the virtuous stretched on racks, their joints and muscles torn apart, the flayed and bleeding bodies of the just, the extinguished eyes of those who sought for truth, the countless patriots who fought and died in vain, the burdened, beaten, weeping wives, the shriveled faces of neglected babes, the murdered millions of the vanished years, the victims of the winds and waves, of flood and flame, of imprisoned forces in the earth, of lightning's stroke, of lava's molten

stream, of famine, plague and lingering pain, the mouths that drip with blood, the fangs that poison, the beaks that wound and tear, the triumphs of the base, the rule and sway of wrong, the crowns that cruelty has worn and the robed hypocrites, with clasped and bloody hands, who thanked their God —a phantom fiend—that liberty had been banished from the world, these souvenirs of the dreadful past, these horrors that still exist, these frightful facts deny that any God exists who has the will and power to guard and bless the human race.

## III.

### THE POWER THAT WORKS FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

MOST people cling to the supernatural. If they give up one God, they imagine another. Having outgrown Jehovah, they talk about the power that works for righteousness.

What is this power?

Man advances, and necessarily advances through experience. A man wishing to go to a certain place comes to where the road divides. He takes the left hand, believing it to be the right road, and travels until he finds that it is the wrong one. He retraces his steps and takes the right hand road and reaches the place desired. The next time he goes to the same place, he does not take the left hand road. He has tried that road, and knows that it is the wrong road. He takes the right road, and thereupon these theologians say, "There is a power that works for righteousness."

A child, charmed by the beauty of the flame,

grasps it with its dimpled hand. The hand is burned, and after that the child keeps its hand out of the fire. The power that works for righteousness has taught the child a lesson.

The accumulated experience of the world is a power and force that works for righteousness. This force is not conscious, not intelligent. It has no will, no purpose. It is a result.

So thousands have endeavored to establish the existence of God by the fact that we have what is called the moral sense ; that is to say, a conscience.

It is insisted by these theologians, and by many of the so-called philosophers, that this moral sense, this sense of duty, of obligation, was imported, and that conscience is an exotic. Taking the ground that it was not produced here, was not produced by man, they then imagine a God from whom it came.

Man is a social being. We live together in families, tribes and nations.

The members of a family, of a tribe, of a nation, who increase the happiness of the family, of the tribe or of the nation, are considered good members. They are praised, admired and respected. They are regarded as good ; that is to say, as moral.

The members who add to the misery of the family, the tribe or the nation, are considered bad members.

They are blamed, despised, punished. They are regarded as immoral.

The family, the tribe, the nation, creates a standard of conduct, of morality. There is nothing supernatural in this.

The greatest of human beings has said, "Conscience is born of love."

The sense of obligation, of duty, was naturally produced.

Among savages, the immediate consequences of actions are taken into consideration. As people advance, the remote consequences are perceived. The standard of conduct becomes higher. The imagination is cultivated. A man puts himself in the place of another. The sense of duty becomes stronger, more imperative. Man judges himself.

He loves, and love is the commencement, the foundation of the highest virtues. He injures one that he loves. Then comes regret, repentance, sorrow, conscience. In all this there is nothing supernatural.

Man has deceived himself. Nature is a mirror in which man sees his own image, and all supernatural religions rest on the pretence that the image, which appears to be behind this mirror, has been caught.

All the metaphysicians of the spiritual type, from

Plato to Swedenborg, have manufactured their facts, and all founders of religion have done the same.

Suppose that an infinite God exists, what can we do for him? Being infinite, he is conditionless; being conditionless, he cannot be benefited or injured. He cannot want. He has.

Think of the egotism of a man who believes that an infinite being wants his praise!

## IV.

WHAT has our religion done? Of course, it is admitted by Christians that all other religions are false, and consequently we need examine only our own.

Has Christianity done good? Has it made men nobler, more merciful, nearer honest? When the church had control, were men made better and happier?

What has been the effect of Christianity in Italy, in Spain, in Portugal, in Ireland?

What has religion done for Hungary or Austria? What was the effect of Christianity in Switzerland, in Holland, in Scotland, in England, in America? Let us be honest. Could these countries have been worse without religion? Could they have been worse had they had any other religion than Christianity?

Would Torquemada have been worse had he been a follower of Zoroaster? Would Calvin have been more bloodthirsty if he had believed in the

religion of the South Sea Islanders? Would the Dutch have been more idiotic if they had denied the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and worshiped the blessed trinity of sausage, beer and cheese? Would John Knox have been any worse had he deserted Christ and become a follower of Confucius?

Take our own dear, merciful Puritan Fathers? What did Christianity do for them? They hated pleasure. On the door of life they hung the crape of death. They muffled all the bells of gladness. They made cradles by putting rockers on coffins. In the Puritan year there were twelve Decembers. They tried to do away with infancy and youth, with prattle of babes and the song of the morning.

The religion of the Puritan was an unadulterated curse. The Puritan believed the Bible to be the word of God, and this belief has always made those who held it cruel and wretched. Would the Puritan have been worse if he had adopted the religion of the North American Indians?

Let me refer to just one fact showing the influence of a belief in the Bible on human beings.

"On the day of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth she was presented with a Geneva Bible by an old man representing Time, with Truth standing by his side as a child. The Queen received the Bible,

kissed it, and pledged herself to diligently read therein. In the dedication of this blessed Bible the Queen was piously exhorted to put all Papists to the sword."

In this incident we see the real spirit of Protestant lovers of the Bible. In other words, it was just as fiendish, just as infamous as the Catholic spirit.

Has the Bible made the people of Georgia kind and merciful? Would the lynchers be more ferocious if they worshiped gods of wood and stone?

## V.

### HOW CAN MANKIND BE REFORMED WITHOUT RELIGION?

RELIGION has been tried, and in all countries, in all times, has failed.

Religion has never made man merciful.

Remember the Inquisition.

What effect did religion have on slavery?

What effect upon Libby, Saulsbury and Andersonville?

Religion has always been the enemy of science, of investigation and thought.

Religion has never made man free.

It has never made man moral, temperate, industrious and honest.

Are Christians more temperate, nearer virtuous, nearer honest than savages?

Among savages do we not find that their vices and cruelties are the fruits of their superstitions?

To those who believe in the Uniformity of Nature, religion is impossible.

Can we affect the nature and qualities of substance by prayer? Can we hasten or delay the tides by worship? Can we change winds by sacrifice? Will kneelings give us wealth? Can we cure disease by supplication? Can we add to our knowledge by ceremony? Can we receive virtue or honor as alms?

Are not the facts in the mental world just as stubborn—just as necessarily produced—as the facts in the material world? Is not what we call mind just as natural as what we call body?

Religion rests on the idea that Nature has a master and that this master will listen to prayer; that this master punishes and rewards; that he loves praise and flattery and hates the brave and free.

Has man obtained any help from heaven?

## VI.

IF we have a theory, we must have facts for the foundation. We must have corner-stones. We must not build on guesses, fancies, analogies or inferences. The structure must have a basement. If we build, we must begin at the bottom.

I have a theory and I have four corner-stones.

The first stone is that matter—substance—cannot be destroyed, cannot be annihilated.

The second stone is that force cannot be destroyed, cannot be annihilated.

The third stone is that matter and force cannot exist apart—no matter without force—no force without matter.

The fourth stone is that that which cannot be destroyed could not have been created; that the indestructible is the uncreatable.

If these corner-stones are facts, it follows as a necessity that matter and force are from and to eternity; that they can neither be increased nor diminished.

It follows that nothing has been or can be created; that there never has been or can be a creator.

It follows that there could not have been any intelligence, any design back of matter and force.

There is no intelligence without force. There is no force without matter. Consequently there could not by any possibility have been any intelligence, any force, back of matter.

It therefore follows that the supernatural does not and cannot exist. If these four corner-stones are facts, Nature has no master. If matter and force are from and to eternity, it follows as a necessity that no God exists; that no God created or governs the universe; that no God exists who answers prayer; no God who succors the oppressed; no God who pities the sufferings of innocence; no God who cares for the slaves with scarred flesh, the mothers robbed of their babes; no God who rescues the tortured, and no God that saves a martyr from the flames. In other words, it proves that man has never received any help from heaven; that all sacrifices have been in vain, and that all prayers have died unanswered in the heedless air. I do not pretend to know. I say what I think.

If matter and force have existed from eternity, it then follows that all that has been possible has hap-

pened, all that is possible is happening, and all that will be possible will happen.

In the universe there is no chance, no caprice. Every event has parents.

That which has not happened, could not. The present is the necessary product of all the past, the necessary cause of all the future.

In the infinite chain there is, and there can be, no broken, no missing link. The form and motion of every star, the climate of every world, all forms of vegetable and animal life, all instinct, intelligence and conscience, all assertions and denials, all vices and virtues, all thoughts and dreams, all hopes and fears, are necessities. Not one of the countless things and relations in the universe could have been different.

## VII.

IF matter and force are from eternity, then we can say that man had no intelligent creator, that man was not a special creation.

We now know, if we know anything, that Jehovah, the divine potter, did not mix and mould clay into the forms of men and women, and then breathe the breath of life into these forms.

We now know that our first parents were not foreigners. We know that they were natives of this world, produced here, and that their life did not come from the breath of any god. We now know, if we know anything, that the universe is natural, and that men and women have been naturally produced. We now know our ancestors, our pedigree. We have the family tree.

We have all the links of the chain, twenty-six links inclusive from moner to man.

We did not get our information from inspired books. We have fossil facts and living forms.

From the simplest creatures, from blind sensation, from organism, from one vague want, to a single cell with a nucleus, to a hollow ball filled with fluid, to a cup with double walls, to a flat worm, to a something that begins to breathe, to an organism that has a spinal chord, to a link between the invertebrate to the vertebrate, to one that has a cranium—a house for a brain—to one with fins, still onward to one with fore and hinder fins, to the reptile mammalia, to the marsupials, to the lemures, dwellers in trees, to the simiæ, to the pithecanthropi, and lastly, to man.

We know the paths that life has traveled. We know the footsteps of advance. They have been traced. The last link has been found. For this we are indebted, more than to all others, to the greatest of biologists, Ernst Haeckel.

We now believe that the universe is natural and we deny the existence of the supernatural.

## VIII.

### Reform.

FOR thousands of years men and women have been trying to reform the world. They have created gods and devils, heavens and hells; they have written sacred books, performed miracles, built cathedrals and dungeons; they have crowned and uncrowned kings and queens; they have tortured and imprisoned, flayed alive and burned; they have preached and prayed; they have tried promises and threats; they have coaxed and persuaded; they have preached and taught, and in countless ways have endeavored to make people honest, temperate, industrious and virtuous; they have built hospitals and asylums, universities and schools, and seem to have done their very best to make mankind better and happier, and yet they have not succeeded.

Why have the reformers failed? I will tell them why.

Ignorance, poverty and vice are populating the world. The gutter is a nursery. People unable

even to support themselves fill the tenements, the huts and hovels with children. They depend on the Lord, on luck and charity. They are not intelligent enough to think about consequences or to feel responsibility. At the same time they do not want children, because a child is a curse, a curse to them and to itself. The babe is not welcome, because it is a burden. These unwelcome children fill the jails and prisons, the asylums and hospitals, and they crowd the scaffolds. A few are rescued by chance or charity, but the great majority are failures. They become vicious, ferocious. They live by fraud and violence, and bequeath their vices to their children.

Against this inundation of vice the forces of reform are helpless, and charity itself becomes an unconscious promoter of crime.

Failure seems to be the trademark of Nature. Why? Nature has no design, no intelligence. Nature produces without purpose, sustains without intention and destroys without thought. Man has a little intelligence, and he should use it. Intelligence is the only lever capable of raising mankind.

The real question is, can we prevent the ignorant, the poor, the vicious, from filling the world with their children?

Can we prevent this Missouri of ignorance and vice from emptying into the Mississippi of civilization?

Must the world forever remain the victim of ignorant passion? Can the world be civilized to that degree that consequences will be taken into consideration by all?

Why should men and women have children that they cannot take care of, children that are burdens and curses? Why? Because they have more passion than intelligence, more passion than conscience, more passion than reason.

You cannot reform these people with tracts and talk. You cannot reform these people with preach and creed. Passion is, and always has been, deaf. These weapons of reform are substantially useless. Criminals, tramps, beggars and failures are increasing every day. The prisons, jails, poorhouses and asylums are crowded. Religion is helpless. Law can punish, but it can neither reform criminals nor prevent crime. The tide of vice is rising. The war that is now being waged against the forces of evil is as hopeless as the battle of the fireflies against the darkness of night.

There is but one hope. Ignorance, poverty and vice must stop populating the world. This cannot

be done by moral suasion. This cannot be done by talk or example. This cannot be done by religion or by law, by priest or by hangman. This cannot be done by force, physical or moral.

To accomplish this there is but one way. Science must make woman the owner, the mistress of herself. Science, the only possible savior of mankind, must put it in the power of woman to decide for herself whether she will or will not become a mother.

This is the solution of the whole question. This frees woman. The babes that are then born will be welcome. They will be clasped with glad hands to happy breasts. They will fill homes with light and joy.

Men and women who believe that slaves are purer, truer, than the free, who believe that fear is a safer guide than knowledge, that only those are really good who obey the commands of others, and that ignorance is the soil in which the perfect, perfumed flower of virtue grows, will with protesting hands hide their shocked faces.

Men and women who think that light is the enemy of virtue, that purity dwells in darkness, that it is dangerous for human beings to know themselves and the facts in Nature that affect their well being,

will be horrified at the thought of making intelligence the master of passion.

But I look forward to the time when men and women by reason of their knowledge of consequences, of the morality born of intelligence, will refuse to perpetuate disease and pain, will refuse to fill the world with failures.

When that time comes the prison walls will fall, the dungeons will be flooded with light, and the shadow of the scaffold will cease to curse the earth. Poverty and crime will be childless. The withered hands of want will not be stretched for alms. They will be dust. The whole world will be intelligent, virtuous and free.

## IX.

RELIGION can never reform mankind because religion is slavery.

It is far better to be free, to leave the forts and barricades of fear, to stand erect and face the future with a smile.

It is far better to give yourself sometimes to negligence, to drift with wave and tide, with the blind force of the world, to think and dream, to forget the chains and limitations of the breathing life, to forget purpose and object, to lounge in the picture gallery of the brain, to feel once more the clasps and kisses of the past, to bring life's morning back, to see again the forms and faces of the dead, to paint fair pictures for the coming years, to forget all Gods, their promises and threats, to feel within your veins life's joyous stream and hear the martial music, the rhythmic beating of your fearless heart.

And then to rouse yourself to do all useful things, to reach with thought and deed the ideal in your brain, to give your fancies wing, that they, like chemist bees, may find art's nectar in the weeds of common things, to look with trained and steady eyes for facts, to find the subtle threads that join the distant with the now, to increase knowledge, to take burdens from the weak, to develop the brain, to defend the right, to make a palace for the soul.

This is real religion. This is real worship.

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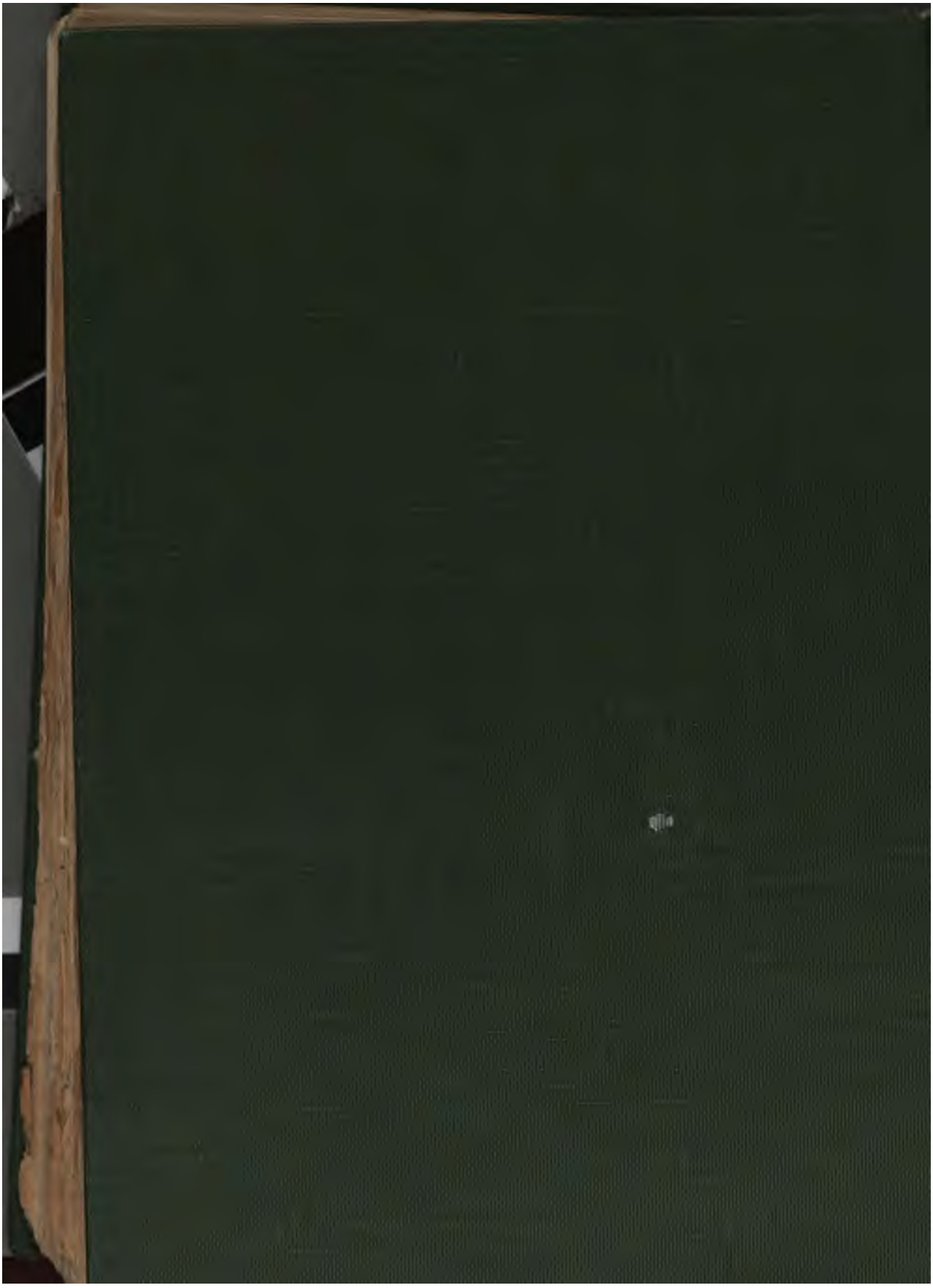
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